



THE POEMS OF FRANÇOIS
VILLON. TRANSLATED BY H. DE
VERE STACPOOLE

FRANÇOIS VILLON

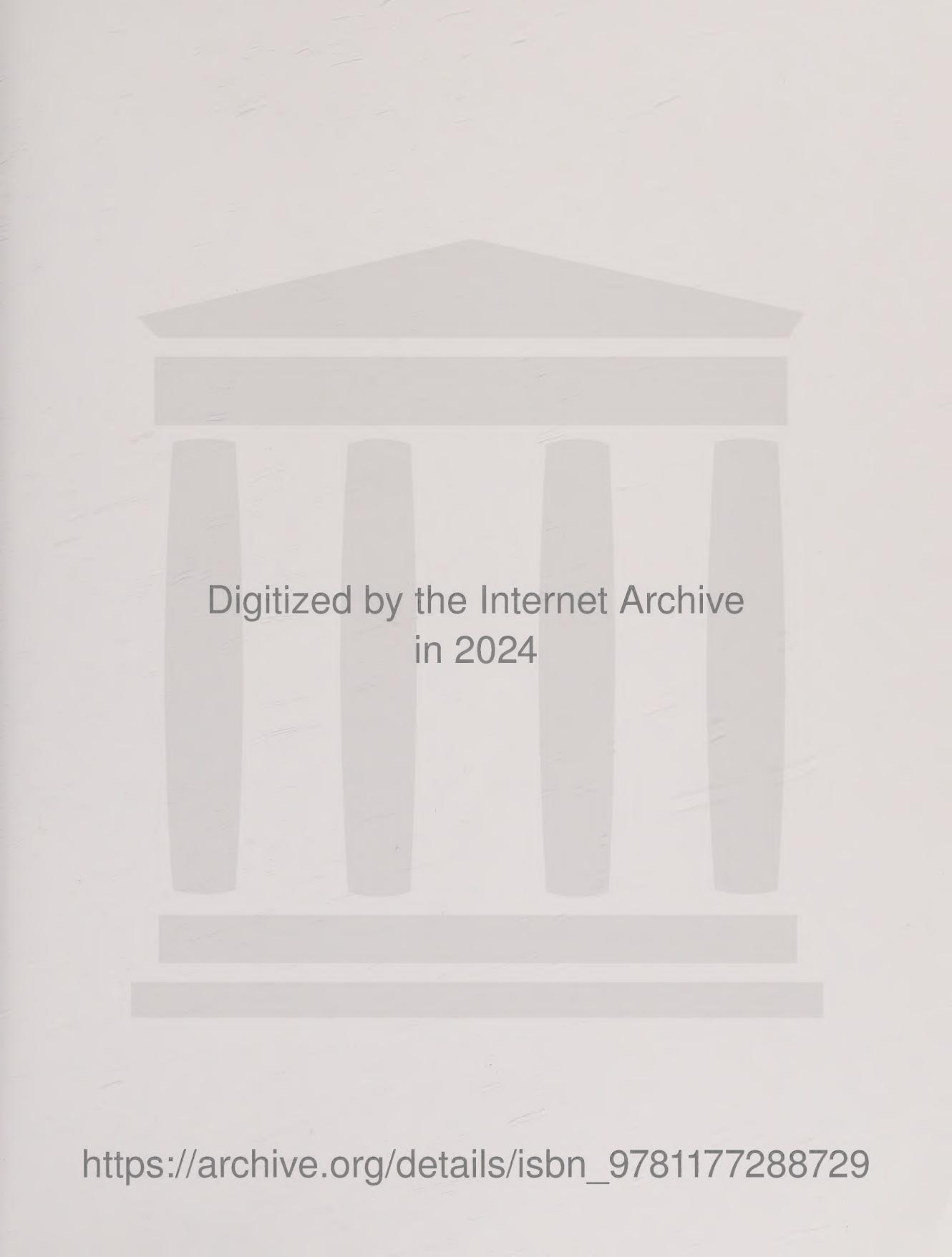
The poems of François Villon.
Translated by H. de Vere Stacpoole

François Villon

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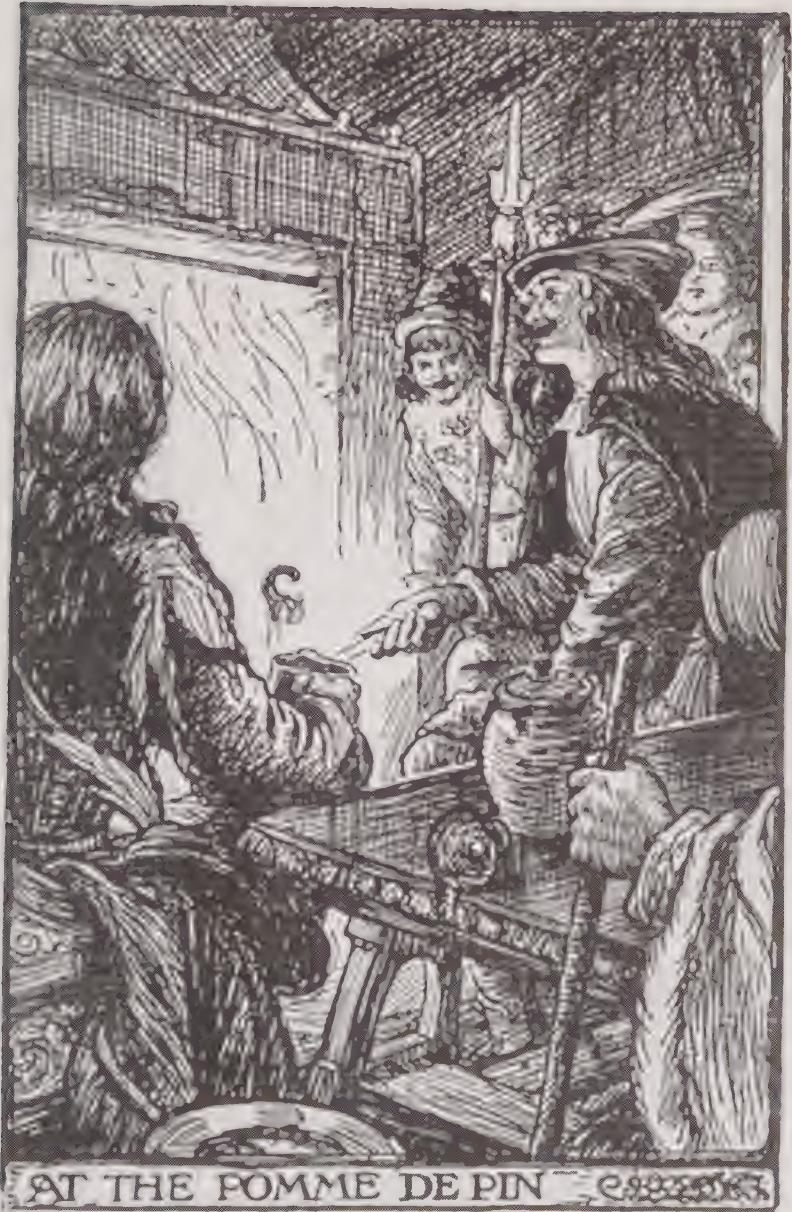
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AT THE POMME DE PIN

THE POEMS
of
FRANÇOIS
VILLON

Translated by
H·De Vere
Stacpoole

NEW YORK
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MCMXIV

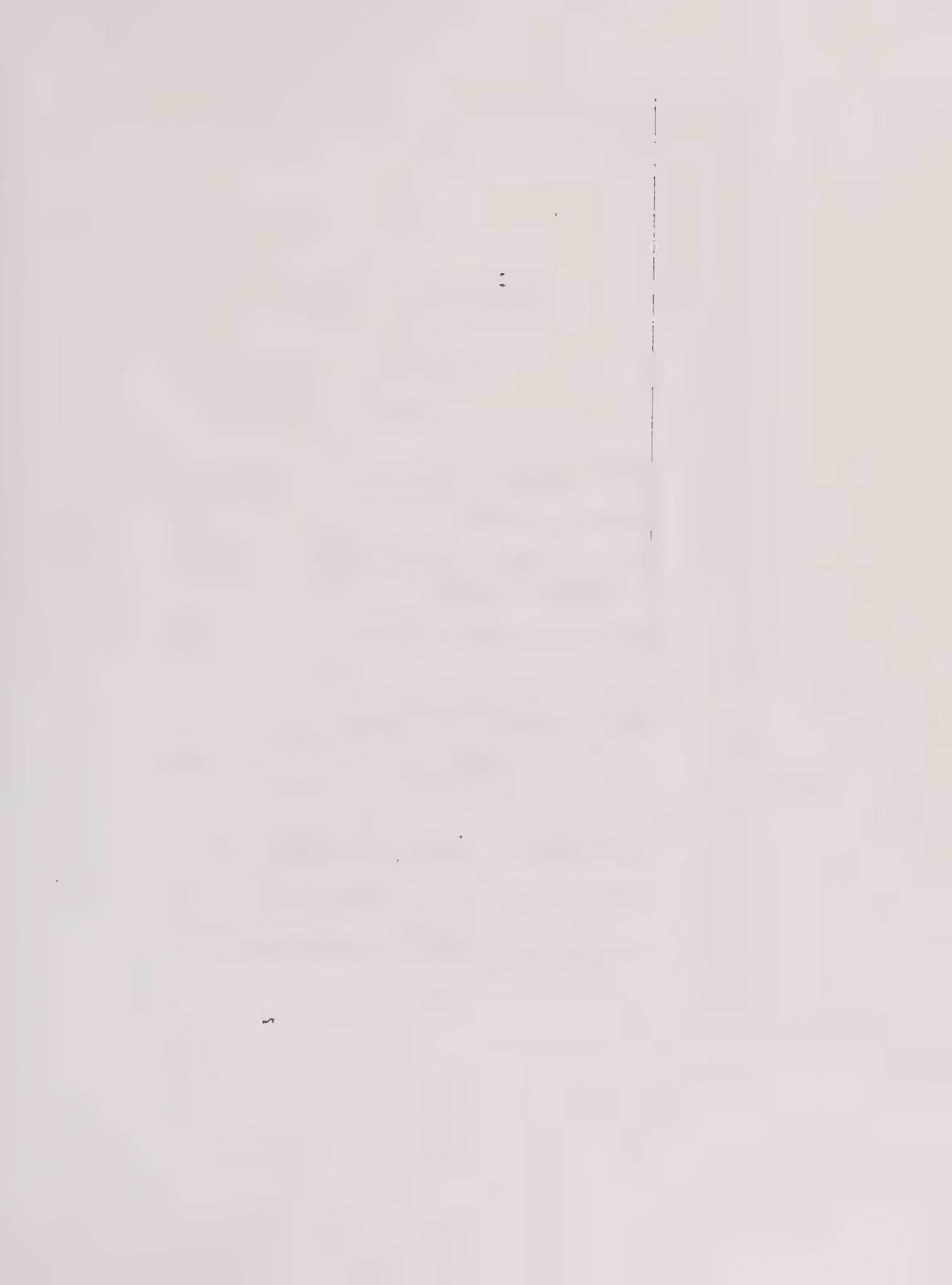
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THE two Testaments of François Villon
with a running commentary and notes,
also the ballades of the Grand Testament
translated into English with a translation
of various Ballades and Rondeaux from
the general poems.



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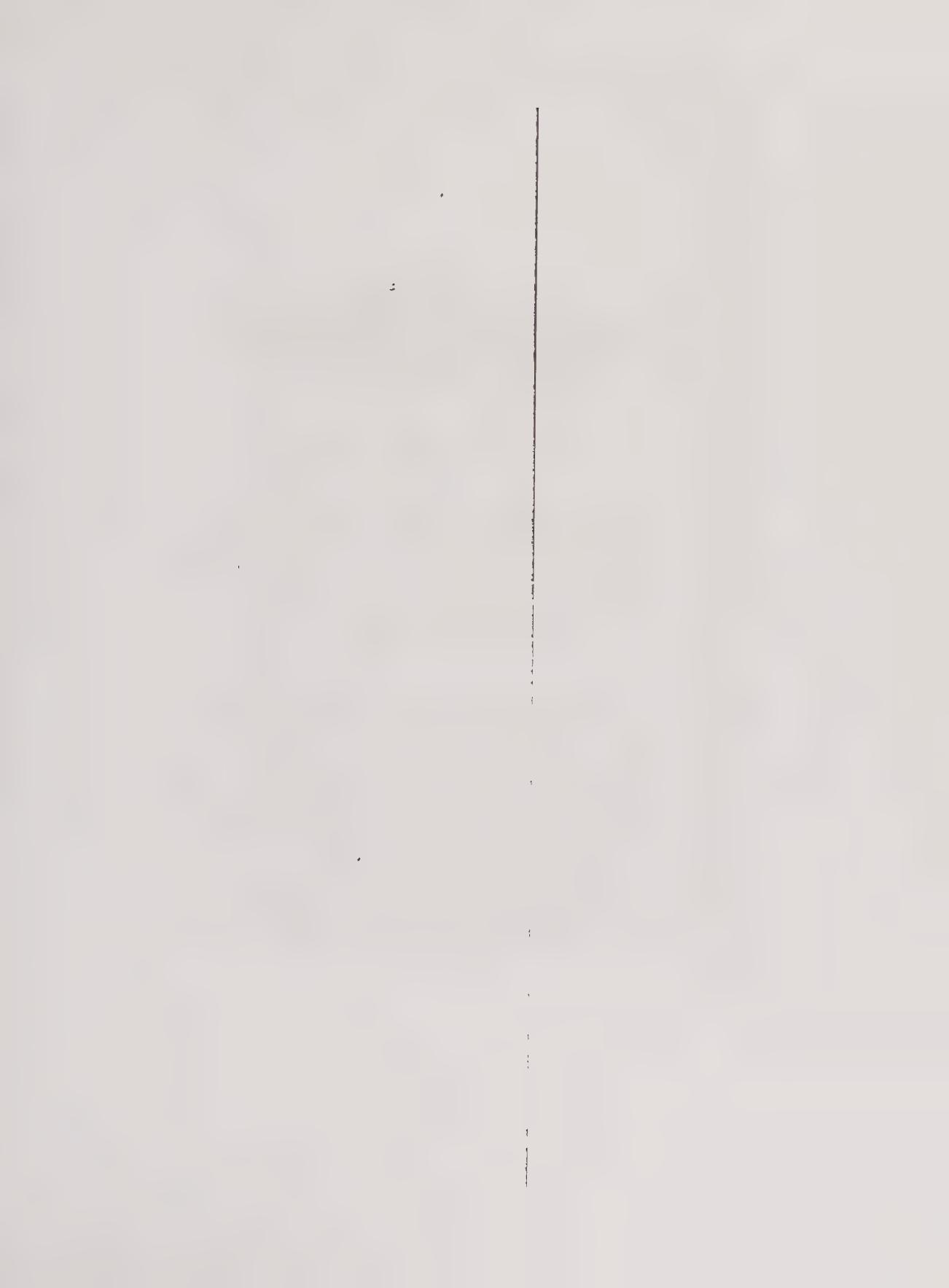
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THE PARIS OF 1456





THE PARIS OF 1456

OPENING the *Petit Testament* is like opening a window on to Old Paris. The air of winter blows at once in your face.

En ce temps que j'ay devant
Sur le Noël, morte saison.

The cry of the wolf sniffing the wind at the city gates crosses the Christmas bells. Spires, chimney-pots, weathercocks, house-gables, cut the freezing sky; the windmills of Petit Gentilli stand stark and still as if menacing the always hungry city, and fronting Gentilli the windmills of Pin-court fling their arms to the air.

Shivering and fascinated one listens and looks, till at last, by some alchemy, one finds oneself in those forgotten streets,

Paris 1456

where dusk and dim lanterns struggle together, and the sudden blaze of a torch carried by at a run shows a crowd that is at once a crowd and a shadow. Beggars, prostitutes, tramps, thieves, priests, and honest citizens—all those who were once human beings—go about their business in that freezing dusk which clings still to the opening and closing lines of the *Petit Testament*.

The litter of the woman of fashion passes, carried by lackeys up to their ankles in filth. The vulture profile of the Arbalétrier and the frozen beard sticking brush-like from his face, gold of baldric, horror of rags—all are lit by the running torch-man.

You turn a corner and the bells hit you in the face; they seem whipped to life by the wind from the north; you cross the Petit Pont, to the Cité, and the Rue de la Juiverie lies before you, with the Church of the Madeleine on one side of it and the Pomme de Pin on the other.

The Pomme de Pin casts its light right out to the road-way. It is the most notable public-house in Paris, and mixed

Paris 1456

with the bells of St. Merri and the carillon of St. Landry the voice of the Pomme comes like the crackling of thorns beneath a pot of mulling wine. There you will find François Villon warming his hands at the fire, thawing the frost and the University out of his blood, and cracking jokes with friends and strangers, whilst Robin Turgis serves the drink. Fournier, the Lieutenant Criminel, shows his ugly face at the door; Guillaume Cotin and Thibault de Vitry look in; the place becomes crowded with students of the University, each one entering blue with cold and each one leaving red with wine.

Dusk is the fashionable hour at the Pomme de Pin, night at the Abreuvoir Popin. The Abreuvoir Popin is one of those tragic places that possess evil personalities of their own. It is a watering-place for horses just by the Petit Pont, and in summer it is frequented by black-guard boys, courtesans, thieves, coiners, students broken from the University, and disfrocked priests. In winter the tavern beside it is crammed. Here you will find Jehan le Loup and Casin Cholet, duck-

Paris 1456

thieves; Regnier de Montigny, Colin de Cayeux, Guy Tabary, Dom Nicholas, Petit-Jehan, and Thibault the goldsmith—all robbers, and worse.

We can see them drinking together with Villon in their midst, discussing the smallest and the meanest matters, unconscious of the immortality he is to give them, and which they would sell for a bottle of wine.

THE THREE QUARTERS

The Paris of Villon, armed, spinous, belted by the wall of Charles V., was divided into three quarters: the University, the Cité, and the Ville. The University, a solid mass of slated roofs, covered the left bank of the Seine from the Tournelle to the tower of Neslé and spread over the hill of St. Geneviève; the Cité, with its twenty-one churches, covered the island of the Cité, and the Ville covered the right bank with its gardens and palaces. Around this city of a thousand churches¹ and ten thousand houses, all

¹ Figurative.

(4)

Paris 1456

fused and huddled together as if for warmth and protection, were the stray towers and windmills of the suburbs of Gentilli, Pincourt, Porcherons, and Ville l'Evêque.

The Cour des Miracles was situated in the Ville. This nightmare place, so vividly painted by Hugo, must have been known to Villon—it recruited from the University as well as from the Church. Shaped like a market-square, it was surrounded by rookeries populated by robbers, beggars, petty thieves, and cut-throats; by gipsies, Jews, and Christians. It broke through the ruined wall of the Ville, and some of the towers of the wall were used as taverns and houses of ill repute. Teeming with people by night, lit by bonfires, unapproachable even by the archers of the watch, the Cour des Miracles, like a terrible lantern, lights the Paris of Villon for the understanding. Where such a place could be, all things might be, and most things unspeakable were.

The Pomme de Pin, the Abreuvoir Popin, and the Cour des Miracles were but three rungs in a ladder. The student who began by drinking at the Pomme often

Paris 1456

ended by sleeping in the Cour des Miracles. Villon fell into the pit at Méun-sur-Loire in the prison of Thibault d'Aussigny—but he at least escaped from falling into the Cour des Miracles.

The Ville, among its other important buildings, held the Louvre and the Hôtel de Ville; it was a much more extensive and less densely populated quarter than either that of the Cité or the University. Though it held the Cour des Miracles, it held also some of the finest houses in Paris. On the Seine bank lay the Hôtel de Jouy and the Hôtels de Sens and Barbeau; the Queen's Palace and the Abbey of the Célestins were also here. Behind these lay the vast grounds of the Hôtel St. Pol, owned by the King of France. Farther afield rose to view the Logis d'Angoulême and the spires and towers of the palace of the Tournelles. To the right of the Tournelles, grim and black, stood the Bastille.

The centre of the Ville was occupied by poor houses. Here lay the Halles and the pillory and the Croix de Trahoir. The great semicircle of the Ville also included a place which, like the Cour des Miracles, throws a

Paris 1456

sinister light on the Paris of Villon—the Marché au Pourceaux, where was situated the cauldron in which coiners were boiled alive.

THE CITÉ

Unlike the Ville, the Cité was simply crusted with buildings—mostly churches. Notre-Dame, like a mother, seemed to have gathered them all around her. In front of the great Cathedral the houses had cleared a space, and the Parvis of Notre-Dame, into which three streets emptied, must have been a sight on a feast-day and coloured by the life of the Ville, the Cité, and the University. Charlemagne, who laid the first stone of the Cathedral, has a place in the verse of Villon, and a whiff of incense from the great old church seems to stray across that ballade written by Villon for his mother.

Notre-Dame, like the Cour des Miracles, also holds its lamp to the city of the poet, illuminating other things than the tenebrous and vile.

Here on the Cité was also situated the

Paris 1456

Palais de Justice at which Villon looks askant; the Palace of the Bishop, at which we may fancy him turning up his nose; the Hôtel-Dieu on the Parvis; and the Hôtel de Juvenal des Ursins—that chronicler of calamities.

THE UNIVERSITY

Crossing over from the city to the University by the Petit Pont, one passed the gateway of the Petit Châtelet and found oneself in a maze of streets. Streets, streets—some narrow, some fairly broad; some cutting through rookeries alive with students, some giving frontage to the colleges, forty-two in number, and spired and domed with the spires and domes of fantasy and the Middle Ages.

One passed abbeys and splendid hotels—the Hôtel de Cluny was here, and the Logis de Nevers, the Logis de Rome, and the Logis de Rheims—till, elbowing churchmen and students, one at last arrived at the church of St. Benoist-le-Bien-tourné, near the Sorbonne.

| The Church of St. Benoist had a double

Villon

influence on the life of François des Loges, otherwise known as François Villon. It was Guillaume Villon, a chaplain of St. Benoist, who adopted François des Loges and gave him his name and shelter in his house, the Porte Rouge, situated in the cloister of St. Benoist.

It was in front of St. Benoist one fine evening that François Villon, sitting on a stone and conversing with Gilles, a priest, and one named Ysabeau, was accosted by Philippe Chermoye, also a priest. In the altercation that ensued Villon struck Chermoye so that he died, a crime—if crime it was—which sent Villon to exile, and helped to give us the “Epistre, en forme de ballade, à ses amis.”

VILLON

Nearly everything in life gave Villon a ballade; if not, a rondel; if not, a verse. A tavern, a church, the picture of a saint, a friend, an enemy, himself, his old mother, or Casin Cholet the duck-thief—all found expression in his genius. He was the voice of Old Paris, and, of all the voices of her

Villon

bells and her people, the only living voice to reach us. Yet he is enough, for he speaks for them all—for the rioters in the taverns, for the chattering girls, for the courtesan grown old; for his mother, so clearly that we can see her in the church where she worshipped; for the creaking gibbet and the howling wolf. There is scarcely a friend that he has forgotten or an enemy he has missed; and he is frank as day about himself.

He says horrible things, he says sordid things, and he says beautiful things, but he says one thing always—the truth, and his lamentations are real no less when he is lamenting his own fate than the fate of the women who have vanished from the world.

Considering the times in which he lived, he is wonderfully clean-spoken and devoid of brutality. Remember, that in the Paris of 1456 they boiled malefactors alive in the cauldron of the swine-market, the graveyards at night were the haunts of debauchery, priests and nuns helped in the recruiting of the army of Crime, and the students of the University were often reduced to begging their bread from door to door. He, in

Villon

his personal life, had been hardly dealt with. He killed Chermoye; and who was Chermoye? a priest armed with a dagger. He was a robber, but he was a robber in an age of robbers. God made him a robber, it is true; but at least let us thank God that He did not make him a tradesman. He was a robber, but he was compassionate towards children and women grown old — see amongst other things, the ballade written for his mother and many of the verses of the Testaments; and it is this feeling for things weak and humble and ruined that lends his verse a grace greater even than the grace lent to it by his genius. To arrive at a true estimate of the man we must look, not at his actions, of which we know little, but at the expressions of his mind which lie before us in his poems. The "Ballade des Pendus" is his masterpiece. It is his naked soul speaking in the shadow of death. Yet it is a prayer, not for himself alone, but for his companions, and not for his companions alone but for all the men hanging on the gibbets of France.

In ballade after ballade, including the "Ballade de Grosse Margot," he has written

Villon

down lust and ill-living for what they are worth, and of that perfect love whose blossom is affection, who has written more beautifully than he in the "Ballade of the Bridegroom"? He knows that little children like cakes better than lessons, and that grown men are just like little children in this respect; he lends his genius alike to an old, pious woman proclaiming her simple faith, and to an old light-o'-love, lamenting her lost youth. His pictures never err, his morality never wearies, his sympathy never turns to sentiment, he is sad but never morbid.

And of this sane and superb mind critics, with a few exceptions, have written as though it were the mind of a petty thief with a turn for verse, or of a decadent poet who had turned to theft, whilst Gautier has placed its owner in the secondary ranks of poets. Gautier! as though an enamel of Petito were to place the position in art of some dim yet living marble man from Tiryns.

We have not even a portrait of Villon; if we had I would swear it showed a better face than the swine face of Rabelais.

Villon

Rabelais, a great genius who rolls in ordure and honour, whilst Villon, a greater, walks despised by people who call themselves honest men.

When Auguste Longnon, searching amidst the archives of the Châtelet de Paris and the Bibliothèque de la Sorbonne, discovered that Villon had many friends who were thieves, he did a great disservice to literature, inasmuch as he incited Robert Louis Stevenson to write his lamentable article on Villon. How so great a man could have put his hand to so mean a work must ever remain one of the mysteries of life. Without charity there is no understanding, and without understanding you may look in vain for charity.

Ayez pitié, Ayez pitié de moy.
A tout les moins, si vous plaist, mes amis!

The Ballades

THE BALLADES

Villon was born in the year 1431. He died on some date unknown. His manner of living, how much he drank, what people he robbed, his love-affairs, his companions and their status in life—all these things are only of interest to us as foot-notes to his literary work, and all these things—first verified—should be set forth without comment.

When a man is living and breathing no other man may dare to attack his reputation; only when he is defenceless through death may the literary kites assemble to dig in his eyes and entrails and make profit out of the corpse of his life and reputation; and a corpse, over four hundred years a corpse, may surely be left at peace, even by these.

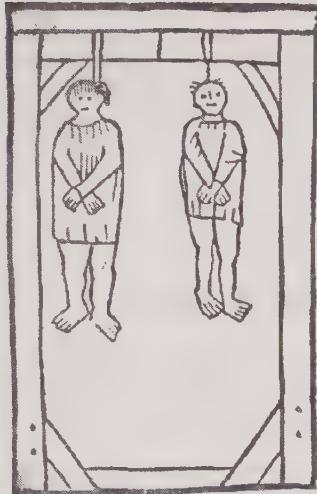
Villon is the greatest and truest of French verse-writers, and if you doubt my word look at his star, which is only now in true ascension, after nearly half a thousand years. He is the only French poet who is entirely real; all the rest are tinged with artifice, and his reality is never more vividly

The Ballades

apparent than when it is conveyed in the most artificial and difficult form of verse.

The ballade, in the hands of this supreme master, is capable of producing the most astonishing results. It is now the perfect necklace that fits the throat of Thaïs, and, now the noose that swings from the gibbet. He only requires thirty-seven lines to say about women what Zola has prosily said in five volumes, and only twenty-eight lines to write the epitaph of all the women who have ever lived. Villon is the most modern of the moderns; his verse, with the gibbets removed, might have been written in the Paris of to-day, and in any civilisation to follow ours he will hold the same high place; for it is his essential that the forms of his genius are the concretions of eternal principles, not the flowery expansions of ephemeral moods.





Epitaphe dudit Villon
Freres humains qui apres nos vives
Doyez les cœurs contre nos enducies
Lat se pire de nos pouurez auez
Dieu en aura plus sois de vous mercie
Vous nous voies et atches enq sig
Quid de la char q icop anōs nontue
Elles si pieca deuouee et pourtie
et nos les os deuends cédes et poussie
Denostre mal personne ne se juge
Mais puis dicu que tous nous voul
Et absoublis

gma

THE GIBBET OF MONTFAUCON

A contemporary woodcut illustration, with the opening lines of Villon's *Ballade des Pendus*, from one of the earliest editions of his poems, published in 1490.



Epitaph in Form of a Ballade

(La Ballade des pendus)

*Which was made by Villon for himself and his
companions whilst waiting with them expecting
to be hanged.*

O BROTHER men who after us shall
thrive,
Let not your hearts against us hardened
be.
For all the pity unto us ye give
God will return in mercy unto ye;
We five or six here swinging from the tree,
Behold, and all our flesh, that once was
fair,
Rotted, and eaten by the beaks that tear,
Whilst we the bones to dust and ash dis-
solve.
Let no man mock us, or the fate we bear;
But pray to God that He may us absolve.

Epitaph in Form of a Ballade

O brothers, hear us and do not receive
Our lamentations in disdain, though we
Came here by justice; for all men that live
Are not born into good sense equally.
Make intercession for us, graciously,
With Him whose life the Virgin once did
share,
That His grace comes to us as water clear,
Nor hell's destructions on our heads de-
volve;
Dead are we, and as dead men leave us
here.
But pray to God that He may us absolve.

— The rain has washed us as we'd been alive,
The sun has dried and blackened us ye see.
The pies and crows that all around us strive
Leave us of eyes and beard and eyebrows
free.
Never from torment have we sanctuary,
Ever and always driven here and there,
At the winds' will, and every change of air.
More dented than the fruit that beaks
revolve;
Men! gaze on us, be warned, and onward
fare—
But pray to God that He may us absolve.

Epitaph in Form of a Ballade

ENVOI

Prince Jesus, Lord of all, have us in care,
And keep from us the fires of hell that
stare,
Lest those dread fires our fate and future
solve.
O brothers, make no mock of what we are,
But pray to God that He may us absolve.

Ballade of Vanished Ladies

(*Ballade des dames du temps jadis*)

NOW say in what land is she,
Fair Flora of Rome? Again,
Where may Hypparchia be,
With Thaïs, in grace germane?
Where's Echo, than mortal slain
Fairer, a voice that goes
O'er river and meer of rain?
But where are the last year's snows?

And where is that learned Héloïse
Whom Abelard loved in vain,
Losing at Saint Denys
Manhood in grievous pain?
And the queen who did ordain
For Buridan his repose,
Cast in a sack to Seine?
But where are the last year's snows!

Ballade of Vanished Ladies

The White Queen fair to see,
Whose song was a siren's strain;
Beatrix, Berthe, Alys;
Harembourges, who held le Mayne?
Joan, the good maid of Lorraine,
Burned by the English foes;
Virgin! where are they ta'en?
But where are the last year's snows!

ENVOI

Prince, of these women slain
Ask not this year—who knows
Where are they?—take the refrain:
But where are the last year's snows!

Ballade of Vanished Lords

(*Ballade des seigneurs du temps jadis*)

I

AND more—that Pope the third Calixte
Last of his name, where is he gone,
Who four years held the Papalist?
Where's Alphonse, King of Aragon.
The gracious lord Duke of Bourbon,
And Artus, Duke of broad Bretagne,
And Charles the seventh named "Le Bon"?
But where is now brave Charlemagne!

Also that Scottish king of mist
And rain, with half his face, saith one,
Vermillion like an amethyst,
Painted from chin right up to crown.
The Cyprian king of old renown,
Alas! and that good king of Spain,
Whose name hath from my memory flown?
But where is now brave Charlemagne!

Ballade of Vanished Lords

I say no more, let me desist
In useless quest of things undone,
For none may pallid Death resist
Or find in law evasion.
One question more and I have done:
Where's Launcelot, ruler of Behaigne,
With¹ Sigismund, beneath what sun?
But where is now brave Charlemagne!

ENVOI

Where's Clauquin now, the good Breton?
Where's the Count Dauphin D'Auvergne,
The last good Duke D'Alençon?
But where is now brave Charlemagne!

¹ The original runs: "Où est-il? Où est son tayon?" The tayon, or maternal grandfather of Launcelot of Behaigne (Ladislas of Bohemia), was the Emperor Sigismund.

Ballade of Vanished Lords

(*Ballade des seigneurs du temps jadis*)

II

THE Saints, Apostles, where are they,
Vestured in albs and each one stoled
In amict; who by neck did lay;
All sinners by the fiend controlled?
And even as these are gone, behold,
So all must go their fate to find,
Servants and sons, and young and old:
So much carries away the wind.

And Constantine's successor—say,
Where is he with his hands of gold?
And the French king who stands for ay
Above all kings whose tales are told;
Who, praising God and saintly souled,
Built convents, and high altars shrined?
Where are the names of these enrolled?
So much carries away the wind.

Ballade of Vanished Lords

And where lie now the Dauphins, pray,
Of Vienne and Grenoble, cold?
The Lords of Dijon, Salins, aye,
And Dolles and others manifold?
Their trumpeters and heralds bold,
Pursuivants, men of every kind?
Are not their mouths well filled with
mould?
So much carries away the wind.

ENVOI

By Death are princes all controlled,
Ev'n as by Death the herd and hind,
And all at last come to his fold.
So much carries away the wind.

The Lament of La Belle Heaulmier

(*Les Regrets de la belle heaulmier*)

METHOUGHT I heard the mournful
sigh
Of her who was the town's mistress,
Lamenting that her youth should die
And speaking thus in sore distress:
"Ah foul age, in your bitterness
And hate, why have you used me so?
What hinders me in my duress
Ending this life so useless now?"

"Broken hast thou the spell so fair
That beauty once gave unto me;
Merchants and clerks and priests once were
My slaves, and all men born to see
Were mine, and paid gold royally
For that without which hearts must break,
For that which now, if offered free,
No thief in all the town would take.

La Belle Heaulmire

"And many a man have I refused—
So little wisdom did I show—
For love of one black thief who used
My youth as bee the flowering bow.
Though, spite my wiles, I loved him so,
And gave him that which I had sold,
For love he paid me many a blow;
Yet well I know he loved my gold.

"Though many a blow and many a kick
He gave me, still my love held true;
Though he bound faggots stick by stick
Upon my back, one kiss would do
To wipe away the bruises blue
And my forgetfulness to win;
And how much am I fatter through
That rogue? whose pay was shame and
sin!

"But he is dead this thirty years,
And I remain, by age brought low,
And when I think, alas! in tears
Of what was then and what is now,
And when my nakedness I show
And all my ruined change I see,
Aged, dried, and withered, none may know
The rage that fills the heart of me!

La Belle Heaulmire

"Where now is gone my forehead white,
Those eyebrows arched, that golden hair,
Those eyes that once, so keen of sight,
Held all men by their gaze so fair;
The straight nose, great nor small, and
where

Those little ears, that dimpled chin,
The fine complexion, pale yet clear,
The mouth just like a rose within?

"Small shoulders with the grace that dips,
The long arms and the lovely hands,
The little breasts, and full-fleshed hips
That once had strong men's arms for bands,
High, broad, and fair as fair uplands
The large reins?

: : : : :

"The forehead wrinkled, hair turned grey,
The eyebrows vanished, eyes grown blind
That once with laughter's light were gay,
Now gone and never more to find;
Nose bent as if beneath some wind,
Ears hanging, mossed with hair unclean,
Life's colour now to Death's inclined,
Chin peaked, and lips like weeds from Seine.

La Belle Heaulmire

“And so all human beauty ends:
The arms grown short, the hands grown
thin,
Shoulders like two fair ruined friends,
The breasts like sacks all shrunken in,
The flanks that now no gaze could win;
That’s best forgot.
The thighs that once were firm, like skin
O’er sausage-meat for stain and spot.

“So we regret the good old times,
And squatting round the fire sit we,
Old tripes, to watch the flame that climbs
And in the fire our past to see.
Like sticks to feed a fire we be,
A fire that soon is lit and done;
Yet had we beauty once—*pardie!*—
Which is the tale of many a one.”

*Ballade of La Belle Heaulmire
to the Filles de Joie*

(*Ballade de la belle heaulmire aux filles de joie*)

NOW hearken, La Belle Gantiere,
Scholar of mine, to me,
And Blanche la Savetiere
Fate in my fortune see.
Take right and left your fee
From men, however placed,
For age-bound women be
Useless as coin defaced.

And you, la Saulcissiere
Who danceth so cunningly,
Guillemette la Tapissiere,
Age must your windows free
Shutter, whilst Love, *pardie!*
Turns, as from some old priest,
Useless for love, as ye,
Useless as coin defaced.

La Belle Heaulmiere

Jeannette la Chaperonniere,
Guard thee from knavery;
Katherine l'Esperonniere
Turn not a man from thee
Who pays—for thy beauty
Endures not, and displaced
Youth leaves Humanity
Useless as coin defaced.

ENVOI

Girls, would you gather why
My tears and my sighs I waste?
Behold me, as here I lie
Useless as coin defaced.

Double Ballade of Good Counsel

(*Double ballade sur le mesme propos*)

GO, love as much as love you will,
And forth to feasts and banquets
stray,
Yet at the end there comes the bill,
And broken heads at break of day.
For light loves make men beasts of prey,
They bent towards idols, Solomon,
From Samson took his eyes away.
Happy is he not so undone.

For this did Orpheus, who could thrill
With pipe and flute the mountains grey,
Come near to death where stands to kill
Four-headed Cerberus at bay;
Also Narcissus, fair as May,
Who in a deep, dark pool did drown
For love of light loves fair and gay.
Happy is he not so undone.

Double Ballade of Good Counsel

Sardana, praised in knighthood still,
Who conquered Crete, did yet betray
His manhood, nor disdained the frill
And skirt for this—or so they say.
King David, great in prophecy,
Forgot his God for sight of one
Who, washing, did her thigh display.
Happy is he not so undone.

And Amnon was a man until
Foul love cast him in disarray;
Feigning to eat of tarts, his skill
O'ercame his sister till she lay
Dishonoured, which was incest, aye,
Most foul. See Herod, who made John
Headless, beneath a dancer's sway.
Happy is he not so undone.

Next of myself—most bitter pill—
I, thrashed as washerwomen bray
Their clothes, in nature's deshabille
Stood nakedly—and wherefore, pray?
Ask Katherine of Vaucelles, malgre
Nöe had most part of the fun.
Such wedding gloves no loves repay;
Happy is he not so undone.

Double Ballade of Good Counsel

But that young man impressible,
Turn him from those young maidens, nay,
Burn him upon the witches' hill,
He'd turn in burning to the fray.
They're sweet to him as civit—aye,
But trust them and your peace is gone;
Brunette or blonde one law obey.
Happy is he not so undone.

*Ballade Written for his Mother
at her Request*

(*Ballade que fait Villon à la requeste de sa mère*)

LADY of Heaven, earthly Queen,
Who hath all hell in empiry,
Receive a humble Christian
Whose prayer it is to dwell with thee.
Though I am worthless, as you see,
Thy boundless grace, that I would win,
Is greater far than my great sin.
None *sans* that grace, unless I lie,
The gates of heaven may enter in.
And in this faith I live and die.

Say to thy Son, on Him I lean,
His grace shall wash my sins from me,
He who forgave t' Egyptian;
Theophilus, also, though he
Long time was held in Satan's fee.

Ballade Written for his Mother

Preserve me that my soul within
Finds joy where sorrow long hath bin,
Virgin, through whose grace even I
May touch God through the wafer thin.
And in this faith I live and die.

A poor old woman—old and lean—
Am I, who know not letters three,
Yet in the cloister have I seen
Heaven in those pictures heavenly.
Where saints and angels ever be
With harps and lutes, and, 'neath their din,
A hell with sinners scorched of skin,
'Twixt joy and fear to thee I fly
Who savest sinners from hell's gin.
And in this faith I live and die.

ENVOI

Thou didst conceive, Princess Virgin,
Jesus, for whom no years begin
Nor end, and who from heaven did spin,
His robe from out our frailty.
Offering to death His youth—I ween
He is our Lord, to us akin,
And in this faith I live and die.

Ballade of Villon to his Mistress

(Ballade de Villon a s'amye)

FALSE beauty, that has cost me dear,
Rude in effect, deceiving sweet,
Love that is more than steel severe,
Name whose letters spell my defeat.
Ruinous charms that my heart did eat,
Pride that kills men cruelly,
Pitiless eyes, will her heart not yet
Turn from disdain and succour me?

Better for me to seek elsewhere;
Well I know that, when at her feet,
Love I can drop no more than care;
Sure 'tis no shame to make retreat.
Haro! unto the small and great
I cry for help, but none I see.
I die, unless that she regret,
Turn from disdain and succour me.

Ballade of Villon to his Mistress

Yet time will yellow turn and sere
Thy face, now like a rose complete.
Then at its running I shall jeer—
But no—for age, that all must meet,
Will have me too; so ere the heat
Of summer is past and winter be—
And whilst thy beauty still doth wait—
Turn from disdain and succour me.

ENVOI

True Prince of Love, who from thy seat
Over all lovers hath emprise,
This prayer for all true hearts is meet:
Turn from disdain and succour me.

Lay; or, rather, Rondeau

(*Lay, ou plustost rondeau*)

D EATH, I cry out against thee
Who hast taken my lady away;
Thy cruelty nought will allay
Till thou takest the life-blood of me.

I have strength nor desire—and she!
What harm did she unto thee—say?
Death!

We were two, yet but one heart had we.
It is dead, and I die, or here stay,
Living, yet lifeless alway,
As the statues without hearts that be,
Death!

Ballade and Prayer

(*Ballade et oraison*) .

FATHER Noah, who planted the vine;
You also Lot, who drank merrily,
And who 'neath the glamour of drink divine
Tasted your daughters' virginity
(Though nought of reproach I make, not
I);
Architriclin, who made drink an art—
I pray you three to this toast reply,
The soul of the good master Jehan Cotart.

Born of your lineage and your line,
He drank of the best and of price most
high,
Never had he a sou to shine,
Yet good wine always could he descry.
Drinkers never yet found him shy,
None from his pot could make him part.
Noble lords, let no man decry
The soul of the good master Jehan Cotart.

Ballade and Prayer

Oft have I seen him totter and twine
When he'd go off on his bed to lie.
He banged his head when once in wine
On a butcher's stall, and was like to die.
High or low, or far or nigh,
Never such drinker could match your heart.
So let it in if you hear it sigh,
The soul of the good master Jehan Cotart.

ENVOI

Prince, 'twas ever and ay his cry,
"Haro! Lord! how my throat does smart!"
Pray where it is 'tis no longer dry,
The soul of the good master Jehan Cotart.

The Ballade of the Bridegroom

*(Ballade que Villon donna à un gentilhomme
nouvellement marié)*

The two first verses give in acrostic the name Ambroise de Lorede, in the original and also in the translation.

AT dawn of day the hawk claps wing,
Moved by his life's nobility
Before the day his song to fling,
Returns, and to the lure sweeps he.
Over you thus desire leads me,
Joyous, and, striking towards you, fleet,
Swiftly to take love's food from thee.
Espoused for this do we two meet.

Dear one, my heart to thee shall cling
Ever till Death makes his decree.
Laurel all victory to bring!
Olive to make the shadows flee!

The Ballade of the Bridegroom

Reason has written it that we
Ever shall find our life complete,
Devoted thus eternally.
Espoused for this do we two meet.

More—when to me comes suffering—
Fortune brings such fatality—
Before thy gaze all-conquering,
Driven like smoke by wind 'twill be.
And I will loose no husbandry,
Nor seed sown in thy garden, sweet;
Its fruit shall hold my imagry.
Espoused for this do we two meet.

ENVOI

Princess, behold my fealty.
Turn eyes; my heart lies at thy feet.
Thy heart is mine, mine yours, now see.
Espoused for this do we two meet.

[The Bridegroom was Robert d'Estouteville, the Bride, Ambroise de Lorede. Ambroise de Lorede died only a few years later, see p. 209.]

*Ballade entitled, “Les Contredictz
de Franc-Gontier”*

(*Ballade intitulée “Les Contredictz de Franc-Gontier”*)

Who was an apostle of the simple life, writing in its praise a little book entitled, “Les Ditz de Franc-Gontier,” which Villon now attacks.

ON a soft-cushioned couch a fat priest lay.
Beside a brazier in a room lay he
With arrased walls, and there, as fair as day,
Beside him lay the lady Sydonie.
They drank of hypocras, and, laughing free,
Kissed and took joy with never thought or sigh,
Heedless of death and putting all care by.
And knew I, even as I spied on these,
Who cared for nought, there is beneath the sky
No treasure but to live and have one's ease.

“Contredictz de Franc-Gontier”

If Franc-Gontier had always lived that
way

With his companion, Helaine, more sweetly
Would they have lived, unforced, through
hunger's sway,

To rub their crusts with onions, he and
she.

Their cabbage-soup has little charm for
me,

I mean no ill—but, in sincerity,
Is it not better on a couch to lie
Than under roses, and the skies that
freeze?

Ask me what would I, and I make reply,
No treasure but to live and have one's
ease.

Eating black bread, or bread of oatmeal
grey,

And drinking water all the year, *pardie!*
Not all the singing-birds, however gay,
From here to Babylon on every tree
Would tempt me for a day for such a fee.
For God's sake, then, let Franc-Gontier re-
ply

To Helaine's kisses where the wild birds
fly,

“Contredictz de Franc-Gontier”

Beneath the eglantine, the summer trees.
No treasure find I in such husbandry.
No treasure but to live and have one's ease.

ENVOI

Prince, on these two opinions cast thine
eye;
But as for me—though I would none dis-
please—
I heard in childhood that man may descry
No treasure but to live and have one's
ease.

Ballade of the Women of Paris

(*Ballade des femmes de Paris*)

TAKE those famed for language fair,
 Past, or in the present tense,
Each good as Love's messenger:
Florentines, Venetiennes.
Roman girls, Lombardiennes,
Girls whose names Geneva carries,
Piedmont girls, Savoysiennes;
No lips speak like those of Paris.

Though for grace of language are
Famed the Neapolitans,
And in chattering Germans share
Pride of place with Prussians.
Taking Greeks, Egyptians,
Austrians, whom no rhyme marries,
Spanish girls, Castillians;
No lips speak like those of Paris.

Ballade of the Women of Paris

Bretonnes, Swiss, their language mar,
Gascon girls, Toulousiennes;
Two fish-fags would close their jar
On Petit Pont, Lorrainiennes,
English girls, Calaisiennes—
All the world my memory harries—
Picard girls, Valenciennes;
No lips speak like those of Paris.

ENVOI

Prince, to fair Parisiennes
Give the prize, nor turn where tarries
One who saith “Italians.”
No lips speak like those of Paris.

Belle Leçon De Villon aux Enfants Perdus

(*Belle Leçon de Villon aux enfans perduz*)

FAIR children, in waste ye strew
The roses that for you blow.
My clerks, who can clutch like glue,
If ye journey to Montipippeau,
Or Reul, have a care, ye know
For the dice that there he threw—
Risking a second throw—
Was lost Colin de Caileux.

This is no little game,
For body and soul are fee;
If ye lose, from a death of shame
Repentance will not save ye.
And the winner, what gain has he?
No Dido for wife he's bought.
Bad, and a fool, must be
The man who risks all for nought.

Belle Leçon De Villon

Now listen unto this song,
For it is the truth I say,
A barrel will last not long
By hearth or in woods of May.
Money soon runs away,
And when it is spent and gone
Where is your heritage, pray?
Evil brings good to none.

*Ballade of Good Doctrine to those
of Evil Life*

(*Ballade de bonne doctrine*)

"Tout aux tavernes et aux filles"

B E ye carriers of bulls,¹
Cheats at dice—whate'er ye be,
Coiners—they who risk like fools,
Boiling for their felony.
Traitors perverse—so be ye—
Thieves of gold, or virgin's pearls,
Where goes what ye get in fee?
All on taverns and on girls.

Song, jest, cymbals, lutes—
Don these signs of minstrelsy.
Farce, imbroglio, play of flutes,
Make in hamlet or city.
Act in play or mystery,
Gain at cards, or ninepin hurls.
All your profits, where go they?
All on taverns and on girls.

¹ Smugglers of Papal bulls.

Ballade of Good Doctrine

Turn, before your spirit cools,
To more honest husbandry;
Grooms of horses be, or mules,
Plough the fields and plant the tree.
If you've no Latinity,
No more learning than the churls,
Work—nor cast your money free
All on taverns and on girls.

ENVOI

Stockings, pourpoint, drapery,
Every rag that round you furls,
Ere you've done, will go, you'll see,
All on taverns and on girls.

Lays

ON return from that hard prison
Where life near was reft from me,
If Fate still shows cruelty,
Judge if she shows not misprision!
For it seems to me, with reason,
She hath found satiety,
On return.

For the Fate is but unreason,
That still wills my misery.
Grant, God! I find sanctuary,
In Thy house from her dark treason,
On return!

Epitaph

HERE IN THIS PLACE SLEEPS ONE WHOM
LOVE
CAUSED, THROUGH GREAT CRUELTY, TO
FALL,
A LITTLE SCHOLAR, POOR ENOUGH,
WHOM FRANÇOIS VILLON MEN DID CALL.
NO SCRAP OF LAND OR GARDEN SMALL,
HE OWNED. HE GAVE HIS GOODS AWAY.
TABLE AND TRESTLES, BASKETS—ALL.
FOR GOD'S SAKE SAY FOR HIM THIS LAY!

Rondel

R EPOSE eternal give to him
O Lord, and Light that never dies;
Even unto him whose platter lies
Empty of meat—yea, even to him
Who standeth bald, in turnip trim,
Sans beard, *sans* hair above the eyes.
Repose!

Fate sent him forth to exile dim,
And struck him hard, above the thighs;
Yet clear he cried, as still he cries,
“*Lord, I appeal!*” yea, even to him
Repose!

Ballade

(*Ballade pour laquelle Villon crye mercy à chascun*)

TO Chartreux and to Célestins,
To Mendicants and to *devotes*,
To idlers and to *cliquepatins*,
To servants and to *filles mignottes*,
Wearing *surcotes* and *justes cottes*,
To all the young bloods that you see
Who wear o'er ankles soft-tanned boots:
To all these folk I cry *Mercy!*

To girls whose breasts are naked twins
To draw to them the eye that gloats,
To brawlers, clowns whose clamour dins,
To showmen training their *marmottes*,
To *Folz* and *Folles*, *Sotz* and *Sottes*
Who pass by whistling frank and free,
To widows and to *mariottes*:
To all these folk I cry *Mercy!*

Ballade

Except those traitors—*chiens mastins!*
Who made me gnaw their rotten crusts
And drink cold water for my sins
For whom I care not now three *crottes*.
I'd make them (here for words place
dots) . . .¹
But that I lie here sick, *pardie!*
No matter, to avoid their plots,
To all these folk I cry *Mercy!*

ENVOI

So long as their stout ribs get lots
Of mallet-blows dealt heavily.
Or strokes from whips with leaden knots,
To all these folk I cry *Mercy!*

¹ Unprintable.

Villon's Last Ballade

(*Ballade pour servir de conclusion*)

HERE is closed the Testament
And finished of poor Villon.
Let your steps to his grave be bent
When you hear the carillon.
Vesture of crimson don,
For a martyr of love lies low.
So swore he on his *callon*¹
When he turned from the world to go.

And I know what he said he meant,
Nor lied, who from love was spun
Like a ball and a wanderer went
From Paris to Rousillon.
Leaving a rag upon
Each hedge for the wind to blow,
So he swore ere his breath was gone,
When he turned from the world to go.

¹ Cap.

Villon's Last Ballade

And so, with his last sou spent,
He finished his race anon.
Whilst yet for his soul's torment
Love's arrow still spread poison
In his heart, which was heavy undone;
And such was his dying woe
We wondered as looked we on
When he turned from the world to go.

ENVOI

Yet, Prince, in his dying swoon
He turned to the red wine's glow,
And he drank the red wine down
When he turned from the world to go.

*Letter, in Form of a Ballade, to
his Friends*

(*Epistre, en forme de ballade, à ses amis*)

Written from the pit in Meung

HAVE pity on me, have pity I pray,
My friends; may I pray you to grant
this grace,
For far from the hawthorn-trees of May
I am flung in this dungeon in this far
place
Of exile, by God and by Fate's disgrace.
New married and young; girls, lovers that
kneel;
Dancers and jugglers that turn the wheel,
Needle-sharp, quick as a dart each one,
Voiced like the bells 'midst the hills that
peal:
Will you leave him like this—the poor
Villon?

Letter to his Friends

Singers who sing without law your lay,
Laughing and jovial in words and ways;
Feather-brained folk, yet always gay,
Who run without coin, good or bad, your
race,
You have left him too long who is dying
apace;
Makers of ballads for tongues to reel,
Where lighting shows not nor breezes steal
Too late you will praise him when he is
gone,
Around whom the walls are like bands of
steel:
Will you leave him like this—the poor
Villon?

Come hither and gaze on his disarray,
Nobles who know not the tax-man's face,
Who homage to kings nor emperors pay,
Only to God in his Paradise.
Behold him who, Sundays and holidays,
Fasts till like rakes his teeth reveal.
Who after crusts, but never a meal,
Water must suck till his belly's a tun.
With stool nor bed for his back's appeal:
Will you leave him like this—the poor
Villon?

Letter to his Friends

ENVOI

Princes, young, or whom years congeal,
A pardon I pray with the royal seal;
Then hoist me in basket the earth upon.
So even will swine for each other feel,
And rush to help at the hurt one's squeal:
Will you leave him like this—the poor
Villon?

Rondel

GOOD year! good week! good day!
Health, joy, and honour with you
stay,
From Better's door to Best pass through,
And joy in love may God give you.
And for a New Year's gift, I pray
A lady than Helaine more gay,
Whose purse may always gold display;
Live long without age touching you.
Good year! good week! good day!

And when you leave this earthly way
May heavenly joy your heart repay
When caught up to the heavenly blue,
Where one may find the only true
Bliss, without pain or sorrow grey.
Good year! good week! good day!

Rondel

YOUR memory is death to me,
My only good the sight of you;
I swear by all that I hold true
That joy without you cannot be.
When I your face no longer view
I die of sadness, yea—*pardie!*
Your memory is death to me.

Alas! sweet sister, fair to see,
Have pity on me, for with you
Evil recoils, the sky is blue;
Without you clouds shade land and sea.
Your memory is death to me!

Rondel

TRUE God of Love, turn here thy gaze,
Draw death to me through Death's
dark ways
More hastily.

For I have badly used my days;
I die of love through Love's delays,
Most certainly.

Grief's weariness upon me preys.

Ballade against the Enemies of France

(*Ballade contre les mesdisans de la France*)

NOW may he meet with beasts that
vomit flame,
Like Jason, hunter of the Fleece of Gold,
Or change from man to brute seven years
the same
As King Nebuchadnezzar did, or hold
To heart the times of suffering and pain
The Trojans held for their princess
Helaine,
Or have a place as deep as Tantalus
And Proserpine in hell's infernal house.
May he, like Job, find grief and suffer-
ance,
Prisoned in the same court with Dædalus,
Who could wish ill unto the realm of
France.

Ballade against Enemies of France

For four months let him like the bittern
scream
Head downward, or to the Grand Turk be
sold
For money paid right down and with the
team
Be harnessed like a bull to till the mould;
Or thirty sad years, like to Magdalene,
Live without cloth of wool or linen clean;
Or let him drown the same as Narcissus;
Or hang like Absalom by lengthy tress;
Or swing like Judas, viewed by all ask-
ance.
Let him like Simon Magus die, even thus,
Who could wish ill unto the realm of
France.

For him again may days Octavian gleam
And in his belly molten coin grow cold;
And like Saint Victor crushed, as by a
beam,
Beneath the mill-wheels may his corpse be
rolled;
Or may his breath beneath the deep seas
fail
Like Jonah's in the body of the whale.

Ballade against Enemies of France

Let him be banned for ay from fair
Phœbus,
And damned for ay from Venus amorous,
And cursed by God beyond all utterance,
Even as old was Sardanapalus,
Who could wish ill unto the realm of
France.

ENVOI

Prince, let him forth be borne by Æolus
To Glaucus in that forest far from us
Where hope nor peace may ever on him
glance.
For he holds nought in him but worthless-
ness
Who could wish ill unto the realm of
France.

The Shepherd and the Shepherdess

(*Ballade*)

*An imitation of a Song in Ballade form, attributed to
François Villon, 1456.*

DEEP in the green woods yesterday
I, wandering, heard the sweet birds
sing:

The nightingale, clear-voiced alway,
And yet more clear the lark on wing.
Returning to my shepherding,
A song came through the trees to me
From maids their fair heads garlanding:
It was the prettiest of the three.

Passing beneath the trees I found
Elise and Marion and Margot
Deep-shadowed where the leaves abound
Singing beneath a hawthorn's snow.
I named them each, and, bowing low,
I prayed and prayed their loves' mercy.
And one made answer to me, "No."
It was the prettiest of the three.

The Shepherd and the Shepherdess

So, standing where the soft shade showers,
My flask full filled with sorrow's wine,
Watching them pluck the gay spring
flowers,

I prayed them for me flowers to twine.
Beneath the hawthorn's shade benign
One's small hand stole in secrecy
And placed a bunch of flowers in mine.
It was the prettiest of the three.

"And is it so, my shepherd maids?
So unto you I say good-bye.
Too proud are ye for these fair glades."
Then one made answer with a sigh,
And with a sprig of rosemary
Said, "Robinet, return to me
On Monday." Then I caught her eye:
It was the prettiest of the three.

O nightingale, sweet messenger,
Sing on beneath the starlit sky
And with thy clear voice say to her
That here without her I must die,
And life for ever from me fly,
Whilst pallid Death my corpse shall see.
Fair maid, whom once I loved, good-bye:
I hear the prettiest of the three.

The Dispute of the Heart and Body of François Villon

*Le Debat du Cœur et du Corps de Villon (en
forme de Ballade)*

WHAT'S that I hear? It is I, thine
heart,
That holds to thee by a little string.
I have no peace; from my blood I part
Seeing thee here, a wretched thing,
Like a dog whining and shivering—
And why do I so?

For thy pleasures' cost.
Why shouldst thou care?

I feel the frost.
Leave me at peace.

And why?
To dream.

When wilt thou mend?
When childhood's lost.
—I say no more.

It were best, I deem.
What thinkest thou art?

Why, a worthy man.
(71)

The Dispute

Thirty art thou. "Tis the age of a mule.

Art thou a child?

Nay!

Tell to me then, is it from Lust thou art
Still a fool, and knowest thou aught
Learned in life's school?

Yea, know I well in milk the flies
Black on the white before mine eyes.
—No more?

What more can I say?

'Twould seem, thou art lost.

Yet even the lost may rise.

I say no more.—It were best, I deem.

I have the sorrow and thou the pain.
If thou wert mad or soft of mind
Then indeed thou mightst hide thy shame;
But if to wickedness thou art blind
Either thy head is a stone, I find,
Or else from good and from grace 'tis shy.
What unto this canst thou make reply?

I will find rest in Death his stream.
—God what a hope!

How thy tongue doth fly!

I say no more.

It were best, I deem.

The Dispute

Whence came this ill?

From my distress.

When Saturn packed my traps for me
He packed these ills.

What stupidness!

Slave art thou to stupidity.

Remember Solomon, what saith he?

A wise man power hath o'er the stars

And on their bent for peace or wars.

—I know that they made me as I seem.

What sayst thou?

Nothing, my faith hath bars.
I say no more.

It were best, I deem.

ENVOI

Wouldst thou be living?

God help me, yes!

Then must thou——

What?

Find penitence. Read——

And read what?

In deep science, and turn from folly
To truth's white gleam. Wilt thou do this?

I will find me sense.

Do so, or worse may come perchance.

I say no more.

It were best, I deem.

(73)



Le Petit Testament

I

LAN quatre cens cinquante et six,
Je, François Villon, escollier,
Considerant, de sens rassis,
Le frain aux dents, franc au collier,
Qu'on doit ses œuvres conseiller,
Comme Végece le racompte,
Saige Romain, grant conseiller,
Ou autrement on se mescompte.

II

En ce temps que j'ay dit devant,
Sur le Noël, morte saison,
Lorsque les loups vivent de vent,
Et qu'on se tient en sa maison,
Pour le frimas, près du tison,
Me vint le vouloir de briser
La tres-amoureuse prison
Qui souloit mon cuer desbriser.



The Little Testament

I

SITTING in a room of the house called the Porte Rouge in the cloister of St. Benoist, in the year 1456, François Villon, scholar, clear of sense, bit between teeth and free in collar, takes notice that a man (to use the words of old Vegetius, the wise Roman) must look after his work, else he comes to grief.

II

He points out that this same year, in the dead season before Christmas, when the wolves are sniffing the wind and every one sits by the chimney-corner, the desire came on him to break from the prison in which Love held him (through the agency of Katherine de Vaucelles, the niece of Pierre de Vaucelles, one of the canons of St. Benoist).

Le Petit Testament

III

Je le feis en telle façon,
Voyant Celle devant mes yeulx
Consentant à ma deffaçon,
Sans que ja luy en fust de mieulx:
Dont je me deul et plains aux Cieulx,
En requerant d'elle vengeance
A tous les dieux venerieux,
Et du grief d'amours allegence.

IV

Et se j'ay prins en ma faveur
Ces doulx regars et beaulx semblans
De tres-decevante saveur,
Me trespersçans jusques aux flancs,
Bien ilz ont vers moy les piez blancs
Et me faillett au grant besoing.
Planter me fault autres complans
Et frapper en un autre coing.

V

Le regard de Celle m'a prins,
Qui m'a esté felonne et dure:
Sans ce qu'en riens aye mesprins,
Veult et ordonne que j'endure

The Little Testament

III

More determined is he on this, inasmuch as his lady is utterly heartless. He calls on the gods whom it concerns to take vengeance on her, calls on Love for help.

IV

Of all the pleasant past only memories remain; therefore now he must plant new seed and find some new place.

V

To escape from her cruelty, that will kill him, he must fly.

Le Petit Testament

La mort, et que plus je ne dure:
Si n'y voy secours, que fuir.
Rompre veult la vive souldure,
Sans mes piteux regrets ouïr!

VI

Pour obvier à ces dangiers,
Mon mieulx est, je croy, de partir.
Adieu! Je m'en voys à Angiers,
Puisqu'ell' ne me veult impartir
Sa grace, il convient despartir.
Par elle meurs, les membres sains!
Au fort, je meurs amant martir,
Du nombre des amoureux saints!

VII

Combien que le despart me soit
Dur, si fault-il que je m'esloingne.
Comme mon povre sens conçoit,
Autre que moy est en queloingne,
Qui plus billon et plus or soingne,
Plus jeune et mieulx garny d'humeur.
C'est pour moy piteuse besoingne
Dieu en vueille ouïr ma clameur!

The Little Testament

VI

He will go to Angers. He is dying for her sake, though his limbs are whole and sound; and will be numbered amid those martyred saints of love!

VII

He sayeth more to the same effect, with a prayer to God for pity.

Le Petit Testament

VIII

Et puisque departir me fault,
Et du retour ne suis certain:
Je ne suis homme sans deffault,
Ne qu'autre d'assier ne d'estain.
Vivre aux humains est incertain,
Et aprés mort n'y a relaiz.
Je m'en voys en pays loingtain
Si establiz ce present Laiz.

IX

Premierement, au nom du Pere,
Du Filz et du Saint-Esperit,
Et de la glorieuse Mere
Par qui grace point ne perit,
Je laisse, de par Dieu, mon bruit
A maistre Guillaume Villon,
Qui en l'honneur de ce nom bruit
Mes tentes et mon pavillon.

X

A Celle doncques que j'ay dict,
Qui si durement m'a chassé
Que j'en suis de joye interdict
Et de tout plaisir deschassé,

The Little Testament

VIII

Since he may never return, he makes this Will.

IX

In the name of the Trinity and the Virgin he leaves to his adoptive father, Master Guillaume Villon, his fair name and his armorial bearings. ("Dans la chevalerie un chef de famille laissait au plus proche héritier de son nom les tentes et les pavillons qui portaient ses armoiries, ses couleurs et ses devises.")

X

To the woman who has so cruelly used him he leaves his dead heart, praying God to forgive her!

Le Petit Testament

Je laisse mon cuer enchassé,
Palle, piteux, mort et transy:
Elle m'a ce mal pourchassé,
Mais Dieu lui en face mercy!

XI

Item, à maistre Ythier, marchant,
Auquel je me sens bien tenu,
Laisse mon branc d'assier tranchant,
Et à maistre Jehan le Cornu,
Qui est en gaige detenu
Pour ung escot huit solz montant:
Je vueil, selon le contenu,
Qu'on leur livre, en le racheptant.

XII

Item, je laisse à Saint-Amant
Le Cheval Blanc, avec la Mulle,
Et à Blaru mon dyamant
Et l'Asne rayé qui reculle.
Et le Decret qui articulle:
Omnis utriusque sexus,
Contre la Carmeliste bulle,
Laisse aux curez, pour mettre sus.

The Little Testament

xI

He leaves his crooked sword of steel to Master Ythier, merchant, that he may get it out of pawn, where it lies pledged for eight sols, and give it to Jehan le Cornu.

xII

He leaves to Saint-Amant (a drunkard) the Mule Tavern and the White Horse; to Blaru his diamond and the Striped Ass (tavern); and the Decretal which begins *Omnis utriusque sexus* to the priests. (See *Grand Testament*, v, LXXXVII.)

Le Petit Testament

XIII

Item, à Jehan Tronne, boucher,
Laisse le mouton franc et tendre,
Et ung tachon pour esmoucher
Le bœuf couronné, qu'on veult vendre,
Et la vache qu'on ne peult prendre:
Le vilain qui l'a, trousse au col,
S'il ne la rend, qu'on le puist pendre
Et estrangler d'ung bon licol!

XIV

Et à maistre Robert Vallée,
Povre clergeron de Parlement,
Qui ne tient ne mont ne vallée,
J'ordonne principalement
Qu'on luy baille legerement
Mes brayes, estans aux trumellieres,
Pour coeffer plus honestement
S'amye Jehanneton de Millieres.

XV

Pource qu'il est de lieu honeste,
Fault qu'il soit mieux recompensé,
Car le Saint-Esprit l'admoneste,
Non obstant qu'il est insensé:

(84)

The Little Testament

XIII

To Jehan Tronne, the butcher, he leaves his fat sheep and a fly-whisk to whisk the flies off his dubious beef and cow-meat. If the man who has the sheep in care won't give it up, let him be strangled.

XIV

To Master Robert Vallée (clerk of Parliament) he bequeaths his breeches, that the said M. R. V. may clothe his mistress, Je-hanneton de Millieres, more respectably.

XV

Also to Master Robert Vallée he bequeaths his *Art of Memory*, to help to balance his want of brains.

Le Petit Testament

Pour ce, je me suis pourpensé,
Qu'on lui baille l'Art de mémoire
A recouvrer sur Malpensé,
Veu qu'il n'a sens mais qu'une aulmoire.

XVI

Item, pour asseurer la vie
Du dessusdict maistre Robert . . .
Pour Dieu! n'y ayez point d'envie!
Mes parens, vendez mon haubert,
Et que l'argent, ou la pluspart,
Soit employé, dedans ces Pasques,
Pour achepter à ce poupart
Une fenestre emprés Saint-Jacques.

XVII

Item, laisse et donne en pur don
Mes gands et ma hucque de soye
A mon amy Jacques Cardon,
Le gland aussi d'une saulsoye,
Et tous les jours une grosse oye
Et ung chappon de haulte gresse,
Dix muys de vin blanc comme croye,
Et deux procés que trop n'engresse.

(86).

The Little Testament

XVI

Also he implores his heirs to sell his hauberk and buy the same Robert Vallée a little shop near Saint Jacques, that he may be able to live.

XVII

Item. He leaves his gloves and his silk hood to his friend, Jacques Cardon ("Cardon avait l'heumeur galante, etait avare et voulait sans doute faire l'élégant"—Prompsault); also to him every day a fat goose, or capon; also a vat of white wine and two lawsuits, lest he should grow too fat—also the acorns that are found on willows !!!

Le Petit Testament

XVIII

Item, je laisse à ce noble homme
René de Montigny troys chiens:
Aussi, à Jehan Raguyer, la somme
De cent francs, prins sur fous mes biens...
Mais quoy! Je n'y comprens en riens
Ce que je pourray acquerir:
On ne doit trop pendre des siens,
Ne ses amis trop requerir.

XIX

Item, au seigneur de Grigny
Laisse la garde de Nygon,
Et six chiens plus qu'à Montigny,
Vicestre, chastel et donjon:
Et à ce malostru Chanjon,
Mouton qui le tient en procés,
Laisse troys coups d'ung escourgeon,
Et coucher, paix et aise, és ceps.

XX

Et à maistre Jacques Raguyer.
Je laisse l'Abreuvouer Popin,
Peschés, poires, sucre, figuier,
Tousjours le choix d'ung bon lopin,

The Little Testament

XVIII

Item. He leaves three dogs to René de Montigny (this same René was one of his accomplices in ill-doing; he was hanged for sacrilege in 1457), and a hundred francs to Jehan Raguyer (one of the sergeants of the Provostry of Paris).

XIX

Item. To the Seigneur de Grigny (one of his companions, a coiner) he leaves the castle of Nygon (an old ruined tower where thieves used to hide, close to Paris gates, and by the river) and six dogs more than to Montigny; also the Bicêtre—and to that villain Chanjon three strokes of a scourge and imprisonment for life.

XX

He leaves the Abreuvoir Popin to Jacques Raguyer and the run of his teeth at the Pomme du Pin.

Le Petit Testament

Le trou de la Pomme de pin
Le doz aux rains, au feu la plante,
Emmailloté en jacopin,
Et qui vouldra planter, si plante.

xxi

Item, à maistre Jehan Mautainct,
A maistre Pierre Basannier,
Le gré du seigneur, qui attaintct
Troubles, forfaits, sans espargnier:
Et à mon procureur Fournier
Bonnetz courtz, chausses semellées,
Taillées sur mon cordouennier,
Pour porter durant ces gellées.

xxii

Item, au Chevalier du guet,
Le heaulme je luy establis:
Et aux pietons qui vont d'aguet,
Tastonnant par ces establis,
Je leur laisse deux beaux rubis:
La Lanterne et la Pierre-au-Let . . .
Voire-mais, j'auray les *Troicts lictz*,
S'ilz me meinent en Chastellet.

The Little Testament

xxi

Item. To maistre Jehan Mautainct and maistre Pierre Basannier "le gré du seigneur," which punishes felonies, and to Fournier (the lieutenant-criminel of the Provostry of Paris) leather belonging to Villon that lies at the cordwainer's ready to make up into caps and shoes.

xxii

Item. To the Captain of the Watch a helmet (the *heaulme* was a closed helmet from which one could scarcely see anything), and to his men, who are always searching for thieves, he leaves two rubies. La Lanterne and la Pierre-au-Let. The rubies are obscure. "Rubies de taverne qu'il avoit au visage—?" (Clement Marot).

Le Petit Testament

XXIII

Item, à Perrenet Marchant,
Qu'on dit le Bastard de la Barre,
Pource qu'il est ung bon marchant,
Luy laisse trois gluyons de fouarre,
Pour estendre dessus la terre
A faire l'amoureux mestier,
Ou il luy fauldra sa vie querre,
Car il n'eschet autre mestier.

XXIV

Item, au Loup et à Chollet,
Je laisse à la foys ung canart,
Prins sur les murs, comme on souloit,
Ou vers les fossez, sur le tard;
Et à chascun un grant tabart
De cordelier, jusques aux pieds,
Busche, charbon et poys au lart,
Et mes houseaulx sans avantpiedz.

XXV

Item, je laisse, et en pitié,
A troys petis enfans tous nudz,
Nommez en ce present traictié,
Povres orphelins impourveuz,

The Little Testament

xxiii

To the merchant Perrenet, otherwise named the Bastard de la Barre, he leaves three trusses of straw to make a bed for his amorous encounters. (This has some obscure reference to Perrenet's coat of arms.)

xxiv

To Jehan le Loup and Casin Chollet (duck-thieves) he bequeaths a duck, caught as of old in the moat of Paris; also a friar's robe, wood, charcoal, bacon, peas, and his old boots. The robe to hide their plunder.

xxv

This verse might seem to stand alone, like an angel at a masquerade, were it not that it is now believed to be ironical. He speaks of three poor children, naked as worms. He wishes them to be provided for, at least till the winter is over.

Le Petit Testament

Tous deschausez, tous despourveuz,
Et desnuez comme le ver:
J'ordonne qu'ils seront pourveuz,
Au moins pour passer cest yver.

xxvi

Premierement, Colin Laurens,
Girard Gossoyn et Jehan Marceau,
Desprins de biens et de parens,
Et n'ont vaillant l'anse d'ung seau:
Chascun de mes biens ung faisseau,
Ou quatre blancs, si l'ayment mieulx...
Ilz mangeront le bon morceau,
Ces enfans, quand je seray vieulx!

xxvii

Item, ma nomination
Que j'ay de l'Université,
Laisse, par resignation,
Pour forclore d'adversité
Povres clercs de ceste cité,
Soubz cest *intendit* contenuz:
Charité m'y a incité,
Et Nature, les voyant nudz.

The Little Testament

xxvi

He gives the names of the little children, leaving each a share of his goods, or four blancs. According to the latest commentators, these poor children were, in reality, three of the wealthiest money lenders of Paris.

xxvii

To rescue some poor clerks, he leaves his right of nomination at the University, incited by charity and seeing them quite naked. (Ironical.)

Le Petit Testament

XXVIII

C'est maistre Guillaume Cotin
Et maistre Thibault de Vitry,
Deux povres clercs, parlans latin,
Paisibles enfans, sans estry,
Humbles, bien chantans au lectry.
Je leur laisse cens recevoir
Sur la maison Guillot Gueuldry,
En attendant de mieulx avoir.

XXIX

Item, et je adjoinctz à la Crosse
Celle de la rue Sainct-Antoine,
Et ung billart de quoy on crosse,
Et tous les jours plain pot de Seine,
Aux pigeons qui sont en l'essoine,
Enserrez soubz trappe voliere,
Et mon mirouer bel et ydoyne,
Et la grace de la geoliere.

XXX

Item, je laisse aux hospitaux
Mes chassis tissus d'araignée,
Et aux gisans soubz les estaux,
Chascun sur l'œil une grongnée,

The Little Testament

XXVIII

He gives their names, and bequeathes them the rent of the Maison Guillot Gueuldry (the Pillory).

XXIX

Also the house in the rue Saint Antoine (the Bastille)—the stick with which prisoners were beaten—and every day a pot of Seine water, also his mirror, and the good graces of the jaileress.

XXX

To the hospitals he leaves his curtains, made of spiders'-webs. To the vagabonds who sleep under the butchers' stalls, each a patch on the eye, and power to shiver,

Le Petit Testament

Trembler à chiere renffrongnée,
Maigres, velluz et morfonduz
Chausses courtes, robbe rongnée,
Gelez, meurdriz et enfonduz.

xxxI

Item, je laisse à mon barbier
Les rongneures de mes cheveulx,
Plainement et sans descombier;
Au savetier, mes souliers vieulx,
Et au frippier, mes habitz tieulx
Que, quant ainsi je les delaisse,
Pour moins qu'ilz ne cousterent neufz,
Charitalement je leur laisse.

xxxII

Item, je laisse aux Mendians,
Aux Filles-Dieu et aux Beguynes,
Savoureux morceaulx et frians,
Chappons, pigeons, grasses gelines,
Et puis prescher les Quinze Signes,
Et abatre pain à deux mains.
Carmes chevauchent nos voisines,
Mais cela ne m'est que du mains.

The Little Testament

and whine and beg with success (the eye-patch doubtless to be part of the malingerer's disguise). See Hugo's description of the Cour des Miracles.

xxxI

To his barber he leaves the clippings of his hair, without any deductions; to his cobbler all his old boots; to his tailor his old clothes.

xxxII

To the Mendicant Orders, the Filles-Dieu, and the Béguines he leaves capons and fat chickens and limitless bread on the understanding that they continue to preach the fifteen signs. (Duchat says that the Mendicant Orders invented fifteen signs, or prodigies, foretelling the last judgment.)

Le Petit Testament

xxxiii

Item, laisse le Mortier d'or
A Jehan, l'espicer de la Garde,
Et une potence à Saint-Mor,
Pour faire ung broyer à moustarde,
A celluy qui feit l'avant-garde,
Pour faire sur moy griefz exploitz:
De par moy, saint Antoine l'arde!
Je ne luy feray autre laiz.

xxxiv

Item, je laisse à Mairebeuf
Et à Nicolas de Louvieulx,
A chascun l'escaille d'un œuf,
Plaine de frances et d'escus vieulx.
Quant au concierge de Gouvieulx,
Pierre de Ronseville, ordonne,
Pour donner, en attendant mieulx
Escus telz que prince les donne.

xxxv

Finalement, en estrivant,
Ce soir, seullet, estant en bonne,
Dictant ces laiz et descripvant,
Je ouys la cloche de Sorbonne,

(100)

The Little Testament

xxxiii

Item. He leaves the Mortier d'Or (the most famous grocers in Paris had for sign a golden mortar; every house in Paris had some sign to distinguish it before the art of numbering houses was discovered) to Jehan the grocer of la Garde. Also the gibbet from Saint-Mor as a pestle to pound his mustard with; see *Grand Testament*, verses cxxvii and cxxviii. The end of the verse is obscure.

xxxiv

He leaves to Mairebeuf and Nicolas de Louvieulx, each one, the shell of an egg filled quite full with francs and écus (a lot it would hold). And he gives Pierre de Ronseville, Governor of Gouvieulx, all the écus paid by Princes who visit the place to share amongst the warders (who doubtless were once his jailers).

xxxv

Lastly, writing here alone to-night, he hears the Angelus ringing from the Sorbonne (nine o'clock).

Le Petit Testament

Qui tousjours à neuf heures sonne
Le Salut que l'Ange predit:
Cy suspendis et cy mys bourne,
Pour prier, comme le cuer dit.

XXXVI

Ce faisant, je me entre-oubliay,
Non pas par force de vin boire,
L'entendement comme lié;
Lors je senty dame Memoire
Rescondre et mectre en son aulmoire,
Sur especes collaterales,
Oppinative faulce et voire
Et autres intellectualles.

XXXVII

Et mesmement l'estimative,
Par quoy la perspective vient,
Similative, formative,
Desquelles souvent il advient
Que, par leur trouble, homme devient
Fol et lunaticque par moys:
Je l'ay leu, et bien m'en souvient,
En Aristote aucunes fois.

The Little Testament

He stops writing to offer up a prayer.

xxxvi

This verse and verses xxxvii, xxxviii, and xxxix which follow were published for the first time by Prompsault. It is almost certain that Villon was not the author of verses xxxvii and xxxviii.

xxxvii

Unauthentic.

Le Petit Testament

XXXVIII

Mais le sensitif s'esveilla
Et esvertua fantasie,
Et tous argutis resveilla,
Car la souveraine partie,
En suspens, estoit amortie
Par oppression d'oubliance,
Qui en moy s'estoit espartie,
Pour montrer des sens l'alliance.

XXXIX

Puis que mon sens fut à repos
Et l'entendement demeslé,
Je cuiday finer mon propos.
Mais mon encre estoit gelé,
Et mon cierge estoit souflée:
De feu je n'eusse pu finer.
C'estoit assez tartevelé.
Pourtant il me convint finer.

The Little Testament

XXXVIII

Unauthentic.

XXXIX

But his ink is frozen; he has no fire. He
must stop.

(105)

Le Petit Testament

XL

Fait au temps de ladicte date,
Par le bien renommé Villon,
Qui ne mange figue ne date:
Sec et noir comme escouillon,
Il n'a tente ne pavillon,
Qu'il n'ayt laissé à ses amys,
Et n'a plus qu'un peu de billon,
Qui sera tantost à fin mys.

ET HO

CY FINE LE TESTAMENT VILLON



The Little Testament

XL

Given at the time aforesaid by the well-renowned Villon, half-starved, dry and black as a flue-brush, without tents or pavilions—which he has left to his friends, with nothing but a little base coin, and even that will soon come to an end!!!

ET HO

CY FINE LE TESTAMENT VILLON





Le Grand Testament

I

EN l'an trentiesme de mon aage,
Que toutes mes hontes j'ay beues,
Ne du tout fol, ne du tout sage,
Nonobstant maintes peines eues,
Lesquelles j'ay toutes receues
Soubz la main Thibault d'Ausigny:
S'evesque il est, seignant les rues,
Qu'il soit le mien je le reny!

II

Mon seigneur n'est, ne mon evesque;
Soubz luy ne tiens, si n'est en friche;
Foy ne luy doy, ne hommage avecque;
Je ne suis son serf ne sa biche.
Peu m'a d'une petite miche
Et de froide eau, tout ung esté.
Large ou estroit, moult me fut chiche.
Tel luy soit Dieu, qu'il m'a esté.



The Great Testament

I

HE takes up his pen in the thirtieth year of his age, in which he has drunk so much shame. He is neither wholly a fool nor wise man. And who's hand brought him to this shame? Who's but Thibault d'Aussigny's, Bishop of Meung (see ballade on p. 60)? Bishop, forsooth! Thibault is no Bishop of his.

II

Neither Bishop nor Lord. He owes no homage to him, nor is he Thibault's serf or hind. Thibault has kept him a whole summer prisoner in a pit, with no food but bread and water.

May God do likewise to Thibault.

Le Grand Testament

III

Et, s'aucun me vouloit reprendre
Et dire que je el mauldys,
Non fais, si bien le scait comprendre,
Et riens de luy je ne mesdys.
Voycy tout le mal que j'en dys:
S'il m'a esté misericors,
Jesus, le roy de paradis,
Tel luy soit à l'ame et au corps!

IV

S'il m'a esté dur et cruel
Trop plus que je ne le racompte,
Je vueil que le Dieu éternel
Luy soit doncq' semblable, à ce compte!...
Mais l'Eglise nous dit et conte
Que prions pour nos ennemis.
Je vous dirai: J'ay tort et honte,
Quoy qu'il m'ait faict, à Dieu remis!

V

Si prieray pour luy de bon cuer,
Et pour l'ame de feu Cotard.
Mais quoy? ce sera doncq par cuer,
Car de lire je suis faitard.

The Great Testament

III

He has nothing to say against Thibault, only this: if Thibault showed him mercy, then may God show mercy to Thibault!

IV

If, on the contrary, Thibault misused him, then may God do likewise to Thibault (Amen). The Church teaches one to love one's enemies. Very well. He will leave the whole matter to God.

V

He will also pray for Thibault; and for the soul of Master Cotart, admitting that he is not much good at prayer. If Villon

Le Grand Testament

Priere en feray de Picard:
Si ne la scait, voise l'apprandre,
S'il m'en croyt, ains qu'il soit plus tard,
A Douay, ou à l'Isle en Flandre!

VI

Combien que s'il veult que l'on prie
Pour luy, foy que doy mon baptesme,
Nonobstant qu'à tous je le crye,
Il ne fauldra pas à son esme.
Au Psaultier prens, quand suis à mesme,
Qui n'est de beuf ne cordoen,
Le verset escript le septiesme
Du psaulme de Deus laudem.

VII

Je prie au benoist Filz de Dieu,
Qu'à tous mes besoings je reclame,
Que ma bonne priere ayt lieu
Vers luy, de qui tiens corps et ame,
Qui m'a preservé de maint blasme
Et franchy de vile puissance.
Loué soit-il, et Nostre-Dame,
Et Loys, le bon roy de France!

The Great Testament

prayed it would be in Picard fashion. If Thibault wants to know what that fashion is let him go to Douai or Lille.

VI

When he is going to pray for Thibault, he will begin his prayer with the seventh verse of the Psalm beginning *Deus Laudem*. Which verse is thus conceived: "Que les jours de sa vie soient réduits au plus petit nombre, et que son évêché passe à un autre."

VII

He implores God's blessed Son to listen to his prayer, and gives praise to our Lady and King Louis of France.

Le Grand Testament

VIII

Auquel doint Dieu l'heur de Jacob,
De Salomon l'honneur et gloire:
Quand de prouesse, il en a trop,
De force aussi, par m'ame! voire.
En ce monde-cy transitoire,
Tant qu'il a de long et de lé,
Afin que de luy soit memoire,
Vive autant que Mathusalé!

IX

Et douze beaulx enfans, tous masles,
Voire de son cher sang royal,
Aussi preux que fut le grant Charles,
Conceuz en ventre imperial,
Bons comme fut saint Martial:
Ainsi en preigne au bon Dauphin.
Je ne luy souhaicte autre mal,
Et puis paradis à la fin.

X

Pource que foible je me sens,
Trop plus de biens que de santé,
Tant que je suis en mon plain sens,
Si peu que Dieu m'en a presté,

(114)

The Great Testament

VIII

Praying God to endow Louis with the happiness of Jacob and the glory of Solomon, and to give his memory as long a life as Methuselah's.

IX

May he have twelve fair sons, brave as Charles the Great and good as saint Martial. He wishes equal luck to the good Dauphin (Joachim of France, son of Charlotte de Savoie). The poor Dauphin got little from Villon's good wishes: he died at about eleven years of age!

X

Our poet, feeling himself very weak, and more impoverished in purse even than

Le Grand Testament

Car d'autre ne l'ay emprunté,
J'ay ce Testament tres-estable
Faict, de darraine voulenté,
Seul pour tout et irrevocable.

XI

Escript l'ay, l'an soixante et ung,
Que le bon Roy me delivra
De la dure prison de Mehun,
Et que vie me recoutra:
Dont suis, tant que mon cuer vivra,
Tenu vers luy me humilier,
Ce que feray jusqu'il mourra:
Bienfaict ne se doit oublier.

*Icy commence Villon à entrer en matière pleine
d'érudition et de bon sçavoir.*

XII

Or est vray qu'aprés plaintz et pleurs
Et angoisseux gemissemens,
Aprés tristesses et douleurs,
Labeurs et griefz cheminemens,
Trouve mes lubres sentemens,
Esguisez comme une pelote,
Mouvoir plus que tous les Commens
D'Averroys sur Aristote.

The Great Testament

in body, uses the clear sense that remains to him for the purpose of writing this Testament (*tres estable* and irrevocable).

XI

Written in the year 1461. The same in which the good king set him free from Thibault's prison at Meung, an act for which he will always serve the king until he dies. Good deeds should always be remembered.

Here begins Villon to enter upon matter full of erudition and good knowledge.

XII

Tears and complaints, sadness and suffering, have taught him wisdom, and taught him more than all the commentaries of Averroës can teach one of Aristotle. Averroës was an Arab doctor, whose commentary on Aristotle Villon mocks at.

Le Grand Testament

XIII

Combien qu'au plus fort de mes maulx,
En cheminant sans croix ne pile,
Dieu, qui les Pellerins d'Esmaus
Conforta, ce dit l'Evangile,
Me monstra une belle ville
Et pourveut du don d'esperance:
Combien que le pecheur soit vile,
Riens ne hayt que perseverance.

XIV

Je suis pecheur, je le scay bien:
Pourtant Dieu ne veult pas ma mort,
Mais convertisse et vive en bien,
Mieulx tout autre que peché mord.
Combien qu'en peché soye mort,
Dieu voulte, et sa misericorde,
Se conscience me remord,
Par sa grace, pardon m'accorde.

XV

Et, comme le noble Romant
De la Rose dit et confesse
En son premier commencement,
Qu'on doit jeune cuer en jeunesse,

The Great Testament

XIII

For to Villon, wandering in the wilderness, God gave comfort and a resting-place. For God does not hate a man for being vile; God only hates a man for being stubborn.

XIV

He is a sinner. He knows that well; but he knows that God does not wait his death, but his repentance.

XV

And, as the noble *Romance of the Rose* says in its first part, "much may be forgiven to youth." Yet, those wicked ones

Le Grand Testament

Quant on le voit meur en vieillesse,
Excuser, helas! il dit voir.
Ceulx donc qui me font telle oppresse
En meureté me vouldroient veoir.

xvi

Se, pour ma mort, le bien publique
D'aucune chose vaulsist mieulx,
A mourir comme ung homme inique
Je me jugeasse, ainsi m'aid' Dieux!
Grief ne faiz à jeune ne vieulx,
Soye sur pied ou soye en biere:
Les montz ne bougent de leurs lieux,
Pour ung povre, n'avant, n'arriere.

xvii

Au temps que Alexandre regna,
Ung homs, nommé Diomedés
Devant luy on luy amena,
Engrillonné poulces et detz,
Comme ung larron; car il fut des
Escumeux que voyons courir,
Et fut mys devant le cadés,
Pour estre jugé à mourir.

(120)

The Great Testament

who oppressed him would have killed him in his youth (before age had redeemed his soul by sense).

XVI

Villon would have killed himself if, by doing so, he could have bettered things for others; but he cannot see that his life does others any harm. The hills will not be stirred by the death of one poor wretch.

XVII

In the time of Alexander a pirate called Diomedes was brought before the emperor in chains to receive his punishment.

Le Grand Testament

XVIII

L'empereur si l'arraisonna:
“Pourquoy es-tu larron de mer?”
L'autre responce luy donna:
“Pourquoy larron me faiz nommer?”
Pource qu'on me voit escumer
Dedans une petite fuste?
Se comme toy me peusse armer,
Comme toy empereur je fusse.

XIX

“Mais que veux-tu de ma fortune,
Contre qui ne pays bonnement,
Qui si faulxement m'infortune,
Que c'est grant esbahissement.
Saches que véritablement
Souvent en bien grant povreté
(Ce mot dit-on communement)
Ne gist pas grande loyaulté.”

XX

Quand l'empereur eut remiré
De Diomedés tout le dict:
“Ta fortune je mueray
De mauvaise en bonne”! luy dit.

The Great Testament

xviii

The emperor asked him, "Why are you a pirate?" The other replied, "Why do you call me a pirate? If I could change my poor vessel for your throne, I would be an emperor, like you.

xix

"Fate alone makes me what I am. Forgive me, for poverty make man do unrighteous things."

xx

Whereat the emperor unto Diomedes said, "I will turn your bad luck into good." This he did, with the result that Diomedes

Le Grand Testament

Si fist-il. Onc puis ne mesdit
A personne, mais fut vray homme.
Valere pour vray le bandit,
Qui fut nommé *le Grant à Romme*.

xxi

Se Dieu m'eust donné rencontrer
Ung autre piteux Alexandre,
Qui m'eust faict en bon heur entrer,
Et lors qui m'eust veu condescendre
A mal, estre ars et mys en cendre
Jugé me fusse de ma voix.
Nécessité faict gens mesprendre,
Et faim saillir les loups des boys

xxii

Je plains le temps de ma jeunesse,
Ouquel j'ay plus qu'autre gallé,
Jusque à l'entrée de vieillesse,
Qui son partement m'a celé:
Il ne s'en est à pied allé,
N'à cheval, helas! Comment donc?
Soudainement s'en est vollé,
Et ne m'a laissé quelque don.

The Great Testament

led ever after a good life. Which story is to be found in Valerius, who in Rome was called "The Great."

XXI

If God had given Villon a compassionate Alexander, Villon admits that death by burning would have been his fitting portion had he gone back to evil courses. But necessity makes men vicious; and drives them forth to rapine, as hunger drives wolves from the wood.

XXII

He mourns over his lost youth, which fled away suddenly from him, and never will return again.

Le Grand Testament

XXIII

Allé s'en est, et je demeure,
Povre de sens et de sçavoir,
Triste, failly, plus noir que meure,
Qui n'ay cens, rente, ne avoir:
Des miens le moindre, je dy voir,
De me desadvouer s'avance,
Oubliant naturel devoir,
Par faulte d'ung peu de chevance.

XXIV

Si ne crains avoir despendu,
Par friander et par leschier:
Par trop aymer n'ay riens vendu,
Que nuls me peussent reprochier,
Au moins qui leur couste trop cher.
Je le dys, et ne croy mesdire.
De ce je me puis revencher:
Qui n'a meffait ne le doit dire.

XXV

Il est bien vray que j'ay aymé
Et aymeroye voulentiers:
Mais triste cuer, ventre affamé
Qui n'est rassasié au tiers,

(126)

The Great Testament

XXIII

It is gone, and he remains, poor and broken, without coin or land, and deserted by those who were once his relations.

XXIV

And, after all, what has he done? He has never been a glutton or bad liver, or done harm in love. If any one says so he lies, and will some day repent of his lie. No—the man who has done no wrong should not confess.

XXV

It is true he has loved, and would do so again; but he has always been too hungry

Le Grand Testament

Me oste des amoureux sentiers.
Au fort, quelqu'un s'en recompense,
Qui est remply sur les chantiers,
Car la danse vient de la panse.

XXVI

Ho Dieu! se j'eusse estudié,
Au temps de ma jeunesse folle,
Et à bonnes meurs dedié,
J'eusse maison et couche molle!
Mais quoy? je fuyoye l'Escole,
Comme faict le mauvais enfant...
En escrivant ceste parole,
A peu que le cuer ne me fend.

XXVII

Le dict du Saige trop le feis
Favorable, bien n'en puys mais,
Qui dit: "Esjoys-toy, mon filz,
A ton adolescence, mais
Ailleurs sers bien d'ung autre mets,
Car jeunesse et adolescence
(C'est son parler, ne moins ne mais)
Ne sont qu'abus et ignorance."

(128)

The Great Testament

and sad to have the full joy of love. Love
and a full belly only agree.

xxvi

If he had *only* studied and worked hard in his youth he would not now be cold in his age. But what did he do? He escaped from school, like the bad child he was, and writing this fact down gives him great bitterness of heart.

xxvii

He has learned the lesson of the sage: "Rejoice in your youth, my son; but consider thy ways, for youth holds error and ignorance."

Le Grand Testament

XXVIII

Mes jours s'en sont allez errant,
Comme, dit Job, d'une touaille
Sont les filetz, quant tisserant
Tient en son poing ardente paille:
Lors, s'il y a nul bout saille,
Soudainement il le ravit.
Si ne crains plus que rien m'assaille,
Car à la mort tout s'assouvit.

XXIX

Où sont les gratieux gallans
Que je suyvoye au temps jadis,
Si bien chantans, si bien parlans,
Si plaisans en faictz et en dictz!
Les aucuns sont mortz et roydiz;
Rien n'est-il plus d'euix maintenant.
Repos ilz ayent en paradis,
Et Dieu saulve le remenant!

XXX

Et les aucuns sont devenuz,
Dieu mercy! grans seigneurs et maistres;
Les autres mendient tous nudz,
Et pain ne voyent qu'aux fenestres;

The Great Testament

XXVIII

His days have been like those tags of the cloth of which Job speaks, and to which the weaver lays a torch so as to burn them off. No matter. Death will free him at last.

XXIX

Where are the gallants with whom he consorted of old, so fine in song and speech, so pleasant in acts and words? Some are dead, they rest in Paradise—and may God have the remainder in His keeping.

XXX

Some—"Dieu mercy!" — have become great lords and masters. Some beg naked, and never see bread, unless in the windows of the bakers' shops. Others are in the

Le Grand Testament

Les autres sont entrez en cloistres
De Celestins et de Chartreux,
Bottez, housez, comm' pescheurs d'oystres:
Voilà l'estat divers d'entre eulx.

XXXI

Aux grans maistres Dieu doint bien faire,
Vivans en paix et en requoy:
En eulx il n'y a que refaire:
Si s'en fait bon taire tout quoy.
Mais aux povres qui n'ont de quoy,
Comme moy, Dieu doint patience:
Aux autres ne fault qui ne quoy,
Car assez ont pain et pitance.

XXXII

Bons vins ont, souvent embrochez,
Saulces, brouetz et gros poissons,
Tartes, flans, œufz fritz et pochez,
Et perdus, en toutes façons.
Pas ne ressemblent les maçons.
Que servir fault à si grant peine:
Ilz ne veulent nulz eschançons,
Car de verser chascun se peine.

The Great Testament

cloisters of the Celestines and the Chartreux, well booted and hosed (as oyster-catchers). Behold the difference between all these!

XXXI

God does well by great nobles. But to the poor—like Villon—may he give patience! They need it more than the others who have plenty.

XXXII

More than they who drink good wine, and have sauces and fat fish, tarts, roast meat, and eggs, fried, poached, and *perdus*. (The receipt for *œufs perdus* is found in an old receipt-book of the fifteenth century which bears the name of Taillevent, Maitre-queux du Roi.) People like these need no butler. They pour out their own drink.

Le Grand Testament

xxxiii

En cest incident me suis mys,
Qui de rien ne sert à mon faict.
Je ne suis juge, ne commis,
Pour punir, n'absouldre meffaict:
De tous suis le plus imparfaict.
Loué soit le doulx Jesus-Christ!
Que par moy luy soit satisfait!
Ce que j'ay escript est escript.

xxxiv

Laissons le monstier où il est:
Parlons de chose plus plaisante.
Ceste matiere à tous ne plait:
Ennuyeuse est et desplaisante.
Povreté, chagrine et dolente,
Tousjours despiteuse et rebelle,
Dit quelque parole cuysante:
S'elle n'ose, si la pense-elle.

xxxv

Povre je suis, dés ma jeunesse,
De povre et de petite extrace.
Mon pere n'euct oncq grant richesse,
Ne son ayeul, nommé Erace.

The Great Testament

xxxiii

But this is all by the way. He is not a judge, commissioned to punish or absolve. He is the most imperfect of all. Let praise be given to Christ, and may all their needs through Him be satisfied. What he has written he has written.

xxxiv

Let us turn to more pleasant subjects. Poverty is always saying bad things—or thinking them.

xxxv

He was poor from his very youth, of small and poor extraction. His father had nothing, nor his ancestor Erace (saint Hierax, who was martyred with saint

Le Grand Testament

Povreté tous nous suyt et trace.
Sur les tumbeaulx de nos ancestres,
Les ames desquelz Dieu embrasse,
On n'y voyt couronnes ne sceptres.

xxxvi

En povreté me guermentant,
Souventesfoys me dit le cuer:
“Homme, ne te doulouse tant
Et ne demaine tel douleur,
Se tu n'as tant qu'eust Jacques Cœur.
Mieulx vault vivre, soubz gros bureaux,
Povre, qu'avoir esté seigneur
Et pourrir soubz riches tumbeaux”!

xxxvii

Qu'avoir esté seigneur! . . . Que dys?
Seigneur! Helas! ne l'est-il mais!
Selon les Davidiques dictz,
Son lieu ne congnoistra jamais.
Quant du surplus, je m'en desmetz,
Il n'appartient à moy, pecheur:
Aux theologiens le remetz,
Car c'est office de prescheur.

The Great Testament

Justin?) Poverty has always followed them, and on the tombs of his ancestors—whom God rest—there are no crowns and sceptres.

xxxvi

Yet when he complains of poverty his heart often has said to him, “If you are not as rich as Jacques Cœur” (the riches of Jacques Cœur, *argentier* to Charles VII, were proverbial), “remember, it is better to be alive and poor than a dead lord rotting in a tomb.”

xxxvii

A lord! He is no longer a lord once dead. As the psalms of David say, “His place knows him no more.” As for the rest that belongs to the theologians.

Le Grand Testament

XXXVIII

Si ne suis, bien le considere,
Filz d'ange, portant dyademe
D'estoille ne d'autre sydere.
Mon pere est mort, Dieu en ayt l'ame!
Quant est du corps, il gyst soubz lame...
J'entends que ma mere mourra,
Et le sc̄ait bien, la povre femme!
Et le filz pas ne demourra.

XXXIX

Je congnoys que, povres et riches,
Sages et folz, prebstres et laiz,
Nobles, vilains, larges et chiches,
Petits et grans, et beaulx et laidz.
Dames à rebrassez colletz,
De quelconque condicion,
Portant attours et bourreletz,
Mort saisit, sans exception.

XL

Et meure Paris ou Helaine!
Quiconques meurt, meurt à douleur.
Celluy qui perd vent et alaine,
Son fiel se creve sur son cuer,

The Great Testament

XXXVIII

He admits he is not the son of an angel! His father is dead—God rest his soul!—his body is buried. He knows that his mother soon must die, and, after her, her son.

XXXIX

He knows that rich and poor, wise men and fools, clergy and laymen, nobles and villeins, small and great, and beautiful and ugly, all must go. Death seizes them without exception.

XL

And be it Helen or Paris dying, whoever dies, he dies in pain (see Swinburne's translation). His gall bursts upon his heart;

Le Grand Testament

Puis sue, Dieu sçait quelle sueur!
Et n'est qui de ses maulx l'allege:
Car enfans n'a, frere ne sœur,
Qui voulsist lors estre son pleige.

XLI

La mort le faict fremir, pallir,
Le nez courber, les veines tendre,
Le col enfler, la chair mollir,
Joinctes et nerfs croistre et estrendre.
Corps feminin, qui tant est tendre,
Poly, souef, si precieulx,
Te faudra-il ces maulx attendre?
Ouy, ou tout vif aller és cieulx.



XLII

Puisque papes, roys, fils de roys,
Et conceuz en ventres de roynes,
Sont enseveliz, mortz et froidz,
En aultres mains passent leurs regnes,

(140)

The Great Testament

then God only knows how he sweats, and none may pay the penalty for him or take his place.

XLI

Death makes him shiver and pale, sharpens his nose, twists his veins—even the bodies of women, so tender and precious, must bear these pangs or else go straight alive to heaven.

Here follow the three great ballades on the mutability of things, "The Ballade Des Dames du Temps Jadis," and the "Ballades of the Seigneurs du Temps Jadis." See pp. 20, 25.

XLII

Since all these—popes, kings, sons of kings, are dead, shall he not die? Yes, if God wills; he has no fear of honest death.

Le Grand Testament

Moy, pauvre mercerot de Rennes,
Mourray-je pas? Ouy, se Dieu plaist;
Mais que j'aye faict mes estrennes,
Honneste morte ne me desplaist.

XLIII

Ce monde n'est perpetuel,
Quoy que pense riche pillart.
Tous sommes soubz mortel coutel.
Ce conseil prend povre viellart,
Lequel d'estre plaisant raillart
Eut le bruyt, lorsque jeune estoit,
Qu'on tiendroit à fol et paillart
Se maintenant s'entremettoit.

XLIV

Or luy convient-il mendier,
Car à ce force le constraint.
Regrette huy sa mort, et hier,
Tristesse son cuer si estrainct:
Souvent, se n'estoit Dieu qu'il crainct,
Il feroit un horrible faict.
Et advient qu'en ce Dieu enfrainct,
Et que luy-mesmes se deffait.

The Great Testament

XLIII

The world does not last for ever. Let the rich robber think what he likes. Old men, who have had their day, take this to heart; men who in their day have been gallants and men of pleasure, but who must drop all that in age, or be ridiculed.

XLIV

Though perhaps they have to beg their bread, wishing each day was their last. Truly sorrow so works on their hearts that, but for God's intervention, they might commit some horrid crime. Sometimes, forgetting God, they kill themselves.

Le Grand Testament

XLV

Car, s'en jeunesse il fut plaisant,
Ores plus rien ne dit qui plaise.
Tousjours viel synge est desplaisant.
Moue ne faict qui ne desplaise
S'il se faist, affin qu'il complaise
Il est tenu pour fol recreu;
S'il parle, on luy dit qu'il se taise,
Et qu'en son prunier n'a pas creu.

XLVI

Aussi, ces povres femmelettes,
Qui vieilles sont et n'ont de quoy,
Quand voyent jeunes pucellettes
Estre en aise et en requoy,
Lors demandent à Dieu pourquoy
Si tost nasquirent, n'à quel droit.
Nostre Seigneur s'en taist tout coy,
Car, au tancer, il le perdroit.



The Great Testament .

XLV

The gay young man is no use when old. An old ape always displeases. Rabelais uses the expression (*Pantagruel*, book iii.) : "Oncques vieil singe ne fist belle moue." They cannot make a grimace without displeasing. If they are silent they are reckoned fools, if they speak they are told to shut up.

XLVI

It is just the same with poor women grown old, who see young girls carrying the day.

Here follows the "Regrets of La Belle Heaul-miere" and the ballade.

Le Grand Testament

XLVII

Ceste leçon icy leur baille
La belle et bonne de jadis.
Bien dit ou mal, vaille que vaille,
Enregister j'ay faict ces ditz
Par mon clerc Fremin l'estourdys,
Aussi rassis que je puys estre...
S'ils me desment, je le mauldys:
Selon le clerc est deu le maistre.

XLVIII

Si aperçoy le grand dangier
Ouquel l'homme amoureux se boute...
Hé! qui me vouldroit laidangier
De ce mot, en disant: "Escoute!
Se d'aymer t'estrange et deboute
Le barat d'icelles nommées,
Tu feras une folle double,
Car ce sont femmes diffamées.

XLIX

"Si n'ayment, fors que pour l'argent:
On ne les ayme que pour l'heure.
Rondement ayment toute gent,
Et rient lorsque bourse pleure.

The Great Testament

XLVII

This lesson (of the preceding ballade) she gives to the beautiful of other days. Good or ill, I have had it written down by my clerk, Fremin. If he has made me lie I curse him, for people will accuse me of his faults ("Selon le clerc est deu le maistre").

XLVIII

He fears to be misinterpreted. Some people may blame him, and say he has been speaking of women of pleasure, not honest women.

XLIX

And also say that honest men only have dealings with women of honour.

Le Grand Testament

De celles-ci n'est qui ne queure.
Mais en femmes d'honneur et nom,
Franc homme, se Dieu me sequeure,
Se doit employer; ailleurs, non."

L

Je prens qu'aucun dye cecy,
Si ne me conteste-il en rien.
En effect, je concludz ainsy,
Et je le cuyde entendre bien:
Qu'on doit aymer en lieu de bien.
Asçavoir-mon se ces fillettes,
Qu'en parolles longuement tien,
Ne furent pas femmes honestes?

LI

Honestes, si furent vrayement,
Sans avoir reproches ne blasmes.
S'il est vray qu'au commencement
Une chascune de ces femmes
Lors prindrent, ains qu'eussent diffames,
Une ung lay, ung clerc, l'autre ung moine,
Pour estaindre d'amours les flammes,
Plus chauldes que feu Saint Antoine.

The Great Testament

L

He agrees with this. He agrees that one should love good women; but, he wants to ask, were not those whom the world decries once good women?

LI

Certainly, till each of them took some man (lay or cleric) to assuage the flame of desire, more burning than the fire of St. Anthony (erysipelas).

Le Grand Testament

LII

Or feirent, selon ce decret,
Leurs amys, et bien y appart:
Elles aymoient en lieu secret,
Ne nul autre n'y avoit part.
Nonobstant, ceste amour s'espart:
Car celle qui n'en avoit qu'un
D'icelluy s'estrange et despart,
Et ayme mieulx aymer chascun.

LIII

Qui les meut à ce? J'imagine,
Sans l'honneur des dames blasmer,
Que c'est nature feminine,
Qui tout homme vouldroit aymer.
Autre chose n'y scay rymer,
Fors qu'on dit, à Reims et à Troys,
Voire à l'Isle et à Saint-Omer,
Que six ouvriers font plus que troys.

LIV

Or ont les folz amans le bond,
Et les dames prins la vollée.
C'est le droit loyer qu'amours ont:
Toute foy y est violée.

The Great Testament

LII

And each one clung to her first love till
she was attracted by some other man.

LIII

Why are women made like this? Just
because they are made like women, and
women are made to love all men. Besides,
six workmen do more work than three.

LIV

Every one complains that love takes
little heed of fidelity. It is just the same
(151)

Le Grand Testament

Quelque doulx baiser n'a collée
De chiens, d'oyseaulx, d'armes, d'amours.
Chascun le dit à la vollée:
"Pour une joie cent doulours."



LV

Se celle que jadis servoye
De si bon cuer et loyaument.
Dont tant de maulx et griefz j'avoye
Et souffroye tant de torment,
Se dit m'eust, au commencement,
Sa voulenté (mais nenny, las!),
J'eusse mys peine aucunement
De moy retraire de ses laz.

LVI

Quoy que je luy voulsisse dire,
Elle estoit preste d'escouter,
Sans m'accorder ne contredire:
Qui plus me souffroit acouter,
Joignant des piés m'arieter,
Et ainsi m'alloit amusant,
Et me souffroit tout racompter,
Mais si n'estoit qu'en m'abusant.

The Great Testament

with hunting, love, and war. For one pleasure a hundred pains.

Here follows the ballade on this subject. See p. 32.

LV

If she whom he served of old time (Katherine de Vaucelles) and for whom he suffered so much, had only shown her hand, he might have escaped from her.

LVI

But what did she do? She listened whilst he told her of his love, she kept him at her feet, she amused herself with him, thus leading him on to his destruction.

Le Grand Testament

LVII

Abuser se faict à entendre
Tousjours d'ung que ce fust ung aultre:
De farine, que ce fust cendre;
D'ung mortier, ung chapeau de feautre;
De viel machefer, que fust peaultre;
D'ambesas, que ce fussent ternes...
Tousjours trompeur aultruy engaultre
Et rend vessies pour lanternes.

LVIII

Du ciel, une poisle d'arain;
Des nues, une peau de veau;
Du matin, que c'estoit serain;
D'un tronçon de chou, ung naveau;
D'orde cervoise, vin nouveau;
D'une truie, ung molin à vent;
Et d'une hart, ung escheveau;
D'un gras abbé ung poursuyvant.

LIX

Ainsi m'ont amours abusé,
Et pourmené de l'huys au pesle.
Je croy qu'homme n'est si rusé,
Fust fin comme argent de coupelle,

The Great Testament

LVII

She blinded him so completely that he believed flour to be cinder and a felt hat a mortar; slag, corn; and the double ace, the trey.

LVIII

Yes, she fooled him till the sky seemed made of brass and the clouds a calf-skin; morning, evening; a cabbage, a turnip; *cervoise* (a sort of beer), new wine; a sow, a windmill; a rope of osier, a bridle; and a fat abbé, a poursuivant.

LIX

Love did this; yet where is the man not willing to be deceived by love, as he has

Le Grand Testament

Qui n'y laissast linge et drapelle,
Mais qu'il fust ainsi manyé
Comme moy, qui partout m'appelle:
L'Amant remys et renyé.

LX

Je renye amours et despite,
Et deffie à feu et à sang.
Mort par elles me precipite,
Et ne leur en chault pas d'ung blanc.
Ma vielle ay mys soubz le banc.
Si amans ne suyvray jamais:
Se jadis je fuz de leur ranc.
Je declaire que n'en suis mais.

LXI

Car j'ay mys le plumail au vent:
Or le suyve qui a attente.
De ce me tays dorenavant.
Poursuyvre je vueil mon entente,
Et, saucun m'interroge ou tente .
Comment d'amours j'ose mesdire,
Ceste parole les contente:
“Qui meurt à ses hoirs doit tout dire.”

The Great Testament

been—he who is called “L’Amant remys et renyé”?

LX

But he has done with love now. He scorns it: “Ma vielle ay mys soubz le banc.” If of old time he belonged to the army of lovers he belongs to it now not at all.

LXI

He has entered into the lists against love, and, if any one takes him to task for speaking like this, remember that a dying man has right to free speech.

Le Grand Testament

LXII

Je congoys approcher ma soef:
Je crache blanc comme cotton,
Jacobins gros comme ung esteuf.
Qu'est-ce à dire? Que Jehanneton
Plus ne me tient pour valeton,
Mais pour ung viel usé regnart...
De viel porte voix et le ton,
Et ne suis qu'ung jeune coquart.

LXIII

Dieu mercy et Jaques Thibault,
Qui tant d'eau froide m'a faict boyre,
En ung bas lieu, non pas en hault;
Manger d'angoisse mainte poire,
Enferré. . . . Quand j'en ay memoire,
Je pry pour luy, *et reliqua*,
Que Dieu luy doint... et voire, voire,
Ce que je pense... *et cetera*.

LXIV

Toutesfoys, je n'y pense mal,
Pour luy et pour son lieutenant;
Aussy pour son official,
Qui est plaisant et advenant,

The Great Testament

LXII

He feels the thirst of death already. He spits white, he is no use to Jehanneton, he is old, worn-out and useless, yet is he—or ought to be—a young cock.

LXIII

He is like this thanks to God and Jacques Thibault (the double-damned Thibault d'Aussigny), who made him drink cold water (put him to the question), and eat pears of anguish (gags). When he thinks of this he prays God to give Thibault—his due.

LXIV

Yet, after all, he wishes no harm to Thibault nor to his lieutenant. He loves

Le Grand Testament

Que faire n'ay du remenant,
Mais du petit maistre Robart?...
Je les ayme, tout d'ung tenant,
Ainsi que faict Dieu le Lombart.

LXV

Il me souvient bien, Dieu mercis!
Que je feis, à mon partement,
Certains Lays, l'an cinquant six,
Qu'aucuns, sans mon consentement,
Voulurent nommer *Testament*.
Leur vouloir fut, mais non le mien.
Mais quoy! on dit communement
Qu'ung chascun n'est maistre du sien.

LXVI .

Et s'ainsi est qu'aucun n'eust pas
Receu les lays que le luy mande,
J'ordonne que aprés mon trespass
A mes hoirs en face demande:
Qui sont-ilz? Si on le demande:
Moreau, Provins, Robin Turgis;
De moy, par dictez que leur mande,
Ont eu jusqu'au lict où je gys.

The Great Testament

the whole lot as God loves Lombards (bankers and Jews of a certain class went under this name).

LXV

He remembers well—"Dieu Mercis!"—that before he went off in the year 1456 he left certain "Lays," which some people, without his consent, called his *Testament*. It was their will not his. But what will you have! Is it not commonly said that no one is master of his own?

LXVI

If by chance any of the people mentioned in *The Little Testament* have not been paid he orders that, after his death, demand be made of his heirs. Who are they? Moreau, Provins, Robin Turgis. He has willed them his goods, even to the bed on which he lies.

Le Grand Testament

LXVII

Pour le revoquer ne le dy,
Et y courust toute ma terre.
De pitié je suys refroidy
Envers le bastard de la Barre.
Parmy ses trois gluyons de foerre.
Je luy donne mes vieilles nattes;
Bonnes seront pour tenir serre
Et soy soustenir sur ses pattes.

LXVIII

Somme, plus ne diray qu'ung mot,
Car commencer vueil à tester:
Devant mon clerc Fremin, qui m'ot
(S'il ne dort), je vueil protester
Que n'entends homme detester,
En ceste presente ordonnance,
Et ne le vueil manifester,
Sinon au royaume de France.

LXIX

Je sens mon cuer qui s'affoiblist,
Et plus je ne puys papier.
Fremin, siez-toy près de mon lict,
Que l'on ne me viengne espier!

The Great Testament

LXVII

He leaves to the Bastard de la Barre, beside the straw devised to him in *The Petit Testament*, his old mats to sustain him on his feet.

LXVIII

Before beginning to test he wishes to say, before his clerk Fremin (if the latter be not asleep), that he (Villon) has never wronged any man in this present ordinance—nor will he make it manifest unless unto the realm of France.

LXIX

He feels his heart growing weak, and orders Fremin, his clerk, to sit close to his

Le Grand Testament

Prens tost encre, plume et papier.
Ce que nomme escryz vistement;
Puis fais-le partout copier,
Et veey le commencement.

Icy commence Villon à tester

LXX

Au nom de Dieu, Pere eternel,
Et du Filz que Vierge parit,
Dieu au Pere coeternel,
Ensemble et le Sainct Esperit,
Qui saulva ce qu'Adam perit,
Et du pery pare les cieulx...
Qui bien ce croyt, peu ne merit
Gens mortz estre faictz petiz Dieux.



LXXXV

Premier, je donne ma povre ame
A la benoiste Trinité,
Et la commande à Nostre Dame,
Chambre de la divinité:
Priant toute la charité
Des dignes neuf Ordres des cieulx
Que par eux soit ce don porté
Devant le trosne precieulx.

(164)

The Great Testament

bed, take paper, pen, and ink, and write what he says, and then have it copied.

Here begins Villon to make his Will.

LXX

In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, etc.

Here followeth four wordy verses (see Appendix) ending with the line "Je me tays et ainsi commence" (I will cut cackling and come to the subject).

Here follow verses lxxi to lxxiv. See Appendix.

LXXXV

First, he commends his poor soul to the Trinity and our Lady, praying all the charity of the nine Orders of the sky that his soul may be carried by them to the precious throne.

Le Grand Testament

LXXVI

Item, mon corps j'ordonne et laisse
A nostre grand mere la terre.
Les vers n'y trouveront grant gresse:
Trop luy a faict faim dure guerre.
Or luy soit delivré grant erre:
De terre vint, en terre tourne.
Toute chose, se par trop n'erre,
Vourentiers en son lieu retourne.

LXXVII

Item, et à mon plus que pere
Maistre Guillaume de Villon,
Qui m'a esté plus doulx que mere,
A enfant levé de maillon,
Dejetté hors de maint boillon
(Et de cestuy pas ne s'esjoye,
Si luy requiers, à genoillon,
Qu'il m'en laisse toute la joye),

LXXVIII

Je luy laisse ma librairie,
Et le *Rommant du Pet au Diable*,
Lequel maistre Guy Tabarie
Grossoya, qu'est hom véritable.

The Great Testament

LXXVI

Item. He leaves his body, worn by hunger, to grandmother Earth. It is so thin that the worms won't get much good from it. It came from earth, let it return to earth. All things, unless he errs, are glad to return from where they came.

LXXVII

Item. To Master Guillaume Villon, his more than father, who has saved him from many a danger and whom he now implores not to search for him,

LXXVIII

He leaves his library, and the *Rommant du Pet au Diable*, written out by that

Le Grand Testament

Par cayers est soubz une table,
Combien qu'il soit rudement faict,
La matiere est si tres-notable
Qu'elle amende tout le meffaict.

LXXIX

Item, donne à ma bonne mere,
Pour saluer nostre Maistresse,
Qui pour moy eut douleur amere,
Dieu le scait, et mainte tristesse...
(Autre chastel ou forteresse
N'ay où retraire corps et ame,
Quand sur moy court male destresse,
Ne ma mere, la povre femme) !



LXXX

Item, m'amour, ma chere Rose:
Ne luy laisse ne cuer ne foye.
Elle aymeroit mieulx autre chose,
Combien qu'elle ait assez mannoye.
Quoy? Une grant bourse de soye,
Pleine d'escuz, profonde et large.
Mais pendu soit-il, qui ce soye,
Qui luy lairra escu ne targe.

(168)

The Great Testament

worthy man Guy Tabarie: It lies somewhere in loose sheets under some table. Though rudely written, the matter is good.

LXXIX

Item. To his mother, who has suffered much through him, he gives the following ballade to help her in the worship of our Lady, than whom neither he nor his mother can see any other refuge in affliction.

Here follows the Ballade to his Mother. See p. 35.

LXXX

Item. To his dear Rose he leaves neither his heart nor his liver. “Elle aymeroit mieulx autre chose”; she has enough money already—a great purse stuffed with écus. May he be hanged who leaves her anything in the shape of money, écu or targe (half an écu).

Le Grand Testament

LXXXI

Car elle en a, sans moy, assez,
Mais de cela il ne m'en chault:
Mes grans deduictz en sont passez,
Plus n'en ay le cropion chauld.
Si m'en desmetz auy hoirs Michault,
Qui fut nommé le bon fouterre.
Priez pour luy, faictes ung sault:
A Saint-Satur gist, soubz Sancerre.

LXXXII

Ce non obstant, pour m'acquitter
Envers amours, plus qu'envers elle,
Car oncques n'y peuz acquester
D'espoir une seule estincelle:
Je ne sçay s'à tous si rebelle
A esté: ce n'est grant esmoy,
Mais, par saincte Marie la belle!
Je n'y voy que rire pour moy.

LXXXIII

Ceste Ballade luy envoye,
Qui se termine toute en R.
Qui la portera? Que j'y voye:
Sera Perinet de la Barre,

(170)

The Great Testament

LXXXI

She has quite enough money as it is.
As for him, he doesn't care a button; his
desire is cold, and he leaves it to the heirs
of Michault, the good lecher who is buried
at Saint-Satur beneath Sancerre (on the
right bank of the Loire in the department
of Cher), that they may pray for him.

LXXXII

He never had any hope from her (Rose),
nor does he care if she turns from others
as she turned from him. It would amuse
him; that he swears by Saint Marie la belle
(Mary Magdalene, the patron saint of
courtesans).

LXXXIII

But here's a ballade for her with all
the rhymes ending in R. Who shall bear it
to her? Why, who but Perinet, the Bastard
de la Barre, so long as if, when he comes

(171)

Le Grand Testament

Pourveu, s'il rencontre en son erre
Má damoyselle au nez tortu,
Il luy dira, sans plus enquerre:
"Orde paillarde, d'où viens-tu?"

LXXXIV

Item, à maistre Ythier, marchant,
Auquel mon branc laissy jadis,
Donne (mais qu'il le mette en chant),
Ce Lay, contenant des vers dix,
Et aussi ung *De Profundis*
Pour ses anciennes amours,
Desquelles le nom je ne dis,
Car il me hayroit à tousjours.



LXXXV

Item, à maistre Jehan Cornu,
Autres nouveaux lays luy vueil faire,
Car il m'a tousjours subvenu
A mon grand besoing et affaire:
Pour ce, le jardin luy transfere,
Que maistre Pierre Bobignon
M'arenta, en faisant refaire
L'huys et redrecer le pignon.

The Great Testament

across his (Villon's) girl with a twisted nose,
he says to her, "Dirty slut, where have you
come from?"

Here follows the ballade. See p. 37.

LXXXIV

Item. To Master Ythier, merchant, to whom he left his sword (see *Petit Testament*, verse xi) he leaves the following lay to be set to music. It is a *De Profundis* for an old love whose name no one must know, else Ythier would hate Villon always.

Here follows "Lay, ou Plustost Rondel." See p. 39.

LXXXV

Item. To Master Jehan Cornu, who has looked after his affairs well in the past, he gives the garden that Pierre Bobignon (in the old editions Bourguignon) rented him (Villon), so long as he mends the door and gable. Cornu was clerk to the Provostry.

Le Grand Testament

LXXXVI

Par faulte d'ung huys, j'y perdis
Ung grez et ung manche de houie.
Alors, huyt faulcons, non pas dix,
N'y eussent pas prins une alloie.
L'hostel est seur, mais qu'on le cloüe.
Pour enseigne y mis ung havet.
Qui que l'ait prins, point ne l'en loüe:
Sanglante nuict et bas chevet!

LXXXVII

Item, et pource que la femme
De maistre Pierre Saint Amant
(Combien, se couple y a ou blasme,
Dien luy pardonne doucement!)
Me meist en reng de caymant,
Pour le Cheval Blanc, qui ne bouge,
Luy delaisse une jument,
Et pour la Mulle, ung Asne rouge.

LXXXVIII

Item, donne à sire Denys
Hesselin, Esleu de Paris,
Quatorze muys de vin d'Aulnis,
Prins chez Turgis, à mes perilz.

The Great Testament

LXXXVI

For want of a door he lost a home and a hoe-handle. This verse is very obscure, and the original French is more luminous than Prompsault's (or any other) reading.

LXXXVII

Because the wife of Pierre Sainct Amant looks down on him he gives her, for the White Horse that does not move, a mare; and, for the Mule, a red ass (see *Petit Testament*, verse xii). Sainct Amant was clerk of the king's treasury, according to Sauval.

LXXXVIII

Item. He gives to Sire Denis Hesselin (Esleu de Paris) fourteen casks of wine d'Aulnis stolen from Turgis by Villon at

Le Grand Testament

S'il en beuvoit tant que periz
En fust son sens et sa raison,
Qu'on mette de l'eau és barrilz:
Vin perd mainte bonne maison.

LXXXIX

Item, donne à mon advocat
Maistre Guillaume Charruau,
Quoy qu'il marchande ou ait estat,
Bon branc . . . Je me tays du fourreau.
Il aura, avec ce, ung réau
En change, affin que sa bourse enfle,
Prins sur la Chaussée et carreau
De la grant closture du Temple.

xc

Item, mon procureur Fournier
Aura, pour toutes ses corvées
(Simple seroit de l'espargner),
En ma bourse quatre havées,
car maintes causes m'a sauvées,
Justes (ainsi Jesus-Christ m'ayde!)
Comme elle ont été trouvées...
Mais bon droit a bon mestier d'ayde.

The Great Testament

his peril (Robin Turgis was landlord of the Pomme de Pin). If he drinks too much, let him put water in the barrel; wine destroys many a good house. Hesselin was a great drinker also Provost of the Merchants from 1470 to 1474.

LXXXIX

Item. He gives to his advocate, Maistre Guillaume Charruau, who has turned merchant, his sword—without the scabbard, and a Royal in copper money to fill his purse, levied from toll on the market-place of the Temple. Charruau was at the university before Villon. He became Bachelor and Master of Arts.

XC

Item. To his procureur, Fournier, he gives “quatre havées” (the *havée* was a toll on the markets of Paris) for his services in gaining him certain causes—even a good cause has need of a good advocate.

Le Grand Testament

XCII

Item, je donne, à maistre Jaques
Raguyer, le grand godet de Greve,
Pourveu qu'il payera quatre plaques,
Deust-il vendre, quoy qu'il luy griefve,
Ce dont on ceuvre mol et greve,
Aller, sans chausse, en eschappin,
Tous les matins, quand il se lieve,
Au trou de la Pomme de pin.

XCII

Item, quant est de Mairebeuf
Et de Nicolas de Louviers,
Vache ne leur donne, ne beuf,
Car vachers ne sont, ne bouviers,
Mais gens à porter esperviers
(Ne cuidez pas que je vous joüe!)
Pour prendre perdriz et plouviers,
Sans faillir, sur la Maschecrouë.

XCIII

Item, vienne Robin Turgis
A moy: je luy payeray son vin...
Combien? S'il trouve mon logis,
Plus fort sera que le devin.

The Great Testament

XCII

Item. He gives to Master Jaques Raguyer, the Grand Godet de Grève (a public-house on the Place de Grève) on condition that he pays four plaques (a coin of Charles VII) for rent, even if he has to sell his breeches to raise the money, and go each morning barefoot to buy wine at the Pomme de Pin.

XCII

Item. To Mairebeuf and Nicolas de Louviers he gives neither ox nor cow, seeing that they are not drovers; but people who go hawking may take partridges and plovers without failing on the Maschecroüe (supposed to be a plain by the Crou, a little river-tributary of the Seine). Villon says he is not joking in this.

XCIII

Item. If Robin Turgis comes to him he will pay him for his wine; that is to say, if Turgis can find him. This may be

Le Grand Testament

Le droit luy donne d'eschevin,
Que j'ay, comme enfant de Paris..
Se je parle ung pou poictevin,
Yce m'eut deux dames appris.

XCIV

Filles sont tresbelles et gentes,
Demourantes à Sainct-Genou,
Prés Sainct-Julian des Voventes,
Marches de Bretaigne ou Poictou,
Mais je ne dy proprement où,
Par qu'elles passent tous les jours..
M'arme! ne seray pas si fou,
Car je veuil celer mes amours.

XCV

Item, à Jehan Raguyer je donne,
Qui est sergent, voire des Douze,
Tant qu'il vivra, ainsi l'ordonne,
Tous les jours, une talemouze,
Pour brouter et fourrer sa mouse,
Prinse à la table de Bailly;
A Maubuey sa gorge arrouse,
Car au manger n'a pas failly.

The Great Testament

rather difficult, also, he leaves Turgis his right, which he holds as a child of Paris. If Villon sometimes speaks Poictevin, it was taught him by two ladies.

xciv

Girls very fair and kindly, living at Sainct-Genou, near Sainct-Julian des Ventes, or in the marches of Brittany or Poitou. He hints that this address is not the right one; he is not going to tell everyone where his sweethearts live.

xcv

Item. He gives to Jehan Raguyer (one of the twelve sergeants attached to the Provost of Paris) a "talemouze" (a sort of pie made of eggs, butter, and cheese) every day, taken from the table of Bailly. And let him quench his thirst at Maubuey (the fountain Maubuey was situated in the rue de Maubuey, a low street).

Le Grand Testament

XCVI

Item, donne au Prince des Sotz,
Pour ung bon sot, Michault du Four,
Qui à la fois dit de bons motz
Et chante bien: *Ma doulce amour!*
Avec ce, il aura le bonjour.
Brief, mais qu'il fust ung peu en poinct,
Il est ung droit sot de séjour,
Et est plaisant où il n'est point.

XCVII

Item, aux unze vingtz Sergens
Donne, car leur faict est honneste,
Et sont bonnes et doulces gens,
Denis Richier et Jehan Vallette,
A chascun une grant cornette,
Pour pendre à leurs chappeaulx de feautre
J'entendz ceulx de pied, à la guette
Car je n'ay que faire des autres.

XCVIII

De rechef, donne à Perinet
J'entendz le bastart de la Barre,
Pource qu'il est beau fils et net,
En son escu, en lieu de barre.

The Great Testament

XCVI

Item. He gives to the Prince of Fools, for a companion, Michault du Four, who sings so well *Ma douce amour* (a song of the day). He hints that the wit of Michault is a questionable quantity. Four was one of the sergeants of the Chatelet.

XCVII

He gives to Denis Richier and Jehan Vallette, sergeants of the Provostry of Paris, a nightcap apiece. Foot-sergeants these. He knows nothing of the others (the Provost of Paris had two companies of sergeants under him, one horse, the other foot).

XCVIII

He gives to Perinet, the Bastard de la Barre, cogged dice and swindlers' playing-cards, to take the place of the bar on his scutcheon!

Le Grand Testament

Trois dez plombez, de bonne carre,
Et ung beau joly jeu de cartes...
Mais quoy! s'on l'oyt vessir ne poirre,
En oultre, aura les fievres quartes.

xcix

Item, ne vueil plus que Chollet
Dolle, trenche, douve, ne boyse,
Relye brocq ne tonnelet,
Mais tous ses outilz changer voyse
A une espée lyonnoise,
Et retienne le hutinet:
Combien qu'il n'ayme bruyt ne noyse,
Si lui plaist-il ung tantinet.

c

Item, je donne à Jehan le Loup,
Homme de bien et bon marchant,
Pource qu'il est linget et flou,
Et que Chollet est mal cherchant,
Ung beau petit chiennet couchant,
Qui ne lairra poulaille en voye,
Ung long tabart, et bien cachant,
Pour les musser, qu'on ne les voye.

The Great Testament

Perinet was a scapegrace who really belonged to a good old family. Jean de la Barre was governor of Paris in 1520.

xcix

Item. He gives to Chollet (see *Petit Testament*, verse viii) no workman's tools. Let him change his tools for a Lyons sword. It will be useful to him in his quarrels.

c

Item. He gives to Jehan le Loup "ung long tabart" (to cover his robberies), and a young setter to help to catch the fowls he is sure to steal. He makes mention of Chollet again (see *Petit Testament*, verse xxiv).

Le Grand Testament

C I

Item, à l'orfevre Du Boys,
Donne cent clouz, queues et testes.
De gingembre sarazinoys,
Non pas pour accoupler ses boytes,
Mais pour conjoindre culz et coettes,
Et couldre jambons et andoilles,
Tant que le laict en monte és tettes,
Et le sang en devalle és coilles.

C II

Au cappitaine Jehan Rou,
Tant pour luy que pour ses archiers,
Je donne six hures de lou,
Qui n'est pas viande à porchiers,
Prins à gros mastins de bouchiers,
Et cuittes en vin de buffet...
Pour manger de ces morceaulx chiers,
On en feroit bien ung mal faict.

C III

C'est viande ung peu plus pesante,
Que duvet, ne plume, ne liege.
Elle est bonne à porter en tente,
Ou pour user en quelque siege.

The Great Testament

C I

Item. To the goldsmith Du Boys he giveth a hundred cloves' of ginger. Ginger was reckoned an aphrodisiac. The rest of the verse is untranslatable—but not obscure.

C II

To Captain Jehan Rou “six hures de lou” (this is supposed to mean six pounds of the flesh of Jean le Loup) stewed in wine—a fine diet for those who would do deeds of ferocity!

C III

Grand food for an army in the field, or besieged! But should the hunting-dogs

Le Grand Testament

Et, s'ilz estoient prins à ung piege,
Ces mastins, qu'ilz ne sceussent courre,
J'ordonne, moy qui suis bon miege,
Que des peaulx, sur l'hyver, se fourre.

CV

Item, à Robin Trousssecaille,
Qui en service s'est bien faict,
A pied ne va comme une caille,
Mais sur rouen gros et reffaict,
Je luy donne, de mon buffet,
Une jatte qu'emprunter n'ose.
Si aura mesnage parfait:
Plus ne luy failloit autre chose.

CV

Item, donne à Perrot Girart,
Barbier juré du Bourg-la-Royne,
Deux bassins et ung coquemart,
Puisqu'à gaigner meet telle peine.
Des ans y a demy douzaine
Qu'en son hostel, de cochons gras
M'apastela, une sepmaine:
Tesmoing l'abesse de Pourras.

The Great Testament

fail to catch Jean le Loup, and be killed themselves, Villon, who knows all about it, orders that their skins should be tanned, and made into furs for him (Captain Rou).

CIV

Item. To Robin Trousssecaille, who disdains to go afoot, and rides a stout roan, he gives his plate, that the said Robin dare not borrow nor steal. Robin then will want nothing else.

CV

Item. He gives to Perrot Girart, sworn barber of Bourg-la-Royne, two basins and a kettle, inasmuch as Perrot supported Villon and the Abesse de Pourras for a week, killing for them all his pigs. (Perrot Girart was also an inn-keeper.)

Le Grand Testament

CVI

Item, aux Freres mendians,
Aux Devotes et aux Beguines,
Tant de Paris que d'Orleans,
Tant Turlupins que Turlupines
De grasses souppes jacobines
Et flans leur fais oblation,
Et puis aprés, soubz les courtines,
Parler de contemplation.

CVII

Si ne suis-je pas qui leur donne,
Mais de tous enfans sont les meres.
C'est Dieu, qui ainsi les guerdonne,
Pour qu'ilz souffrent peines ameres.
Il fault qu'ilz vivent, les beaux peres,
Et mesmement ceulx de Paris.
S'ilz font plaisir à noz commeres,
Ils ayment ainsi les maris.

CVIII

Quoy que maistre Jehan de Pontlieu
En voulsist dire, *et reliqua*,
Contrainct, et en publique lieu,
Honteusement s'en revocqua.

(190)

The Great Testament

CVI

Item. To the Mendicant Brothers, the Devotes, the Beguines of Paris and Orleans, he makes oblation of fat soups and custards. (Prompsault thinks the Devotes were the same as the Filles-Dieu.) When they have filled themselves let them talk of contemplation (under the sheets).

CVII

In this and the two succeeding stanzas
he talketh of the church-people aforesaid.

Le Grand Testament

Maistre Jehan de Meung se moqua
De leur façon; si feit Mathieu.
Mais on doit honnorer ce qu'a
Honoré l'Eglise de Dieu.

CIX

Si me soubmectz leur serviteur,
En tout ce que puis faire et dire,
A les honnorer de bon cuer,
Et servir, sans y contredire.
L'homme bien fol est d'en mesdire,
Car, soit à part, ou en prescher,
Ou ailleurs, il ne fault pas dire
Si gens sont pour eux revencher.

CX

Item, je donne à frere Baulde,
Demourant à l'hostel des Carmes,
Portant chere hardie et baulde,
Une sallade et deux guysarmes,
Que De Tusca et ses gens d'armes
Ne luy riblent sa Caige-vert.
Viel est: s'il ne se rend aux armes,
C'est bien le diable de Vauvert.

The Great Testament

CX

He gives to frère Baulde (Henri Baulde, a contemporary poet) certain armour to help him resist De Tusca (sergeant of police), should the latter interfere in his amours. Baulde belonged to the Carmelites of the Place Maubert. He was one of Vil-lon's boon companions.

Le Grand Testament

CXI

Item, pource que le Scelleur
Maint estront de mousche a masché,
Donne, car homme est de valleur,
Son sceau davantage craché,
Et qu'il ait le poulce escaché,
Pour tout empraindre à une voye:
J'entendy celluy de l'Evesché,
Car les autres, Dieu les pourvoye.

CXII

Quant de messieurs les Auditeux,
Leur Chambre auront lembroysée,
Et ceulx qui ont le cul rongneux,
Chascun une chaise percée,
Mais qu'à la petite Macé
D'Orleans, qui eut ma ceinture,
L'amende soit bien hault taxée:
Elle est une mauvaise ordure.

CXIII

Item, donne à maistre Françoys,
Promoteur de la vacquerie.
Ung hault gorgerin d'Escossoys,
Toutesfois sans orfaverie:

(194)

The Great Testament

CXI

Item. He gives to the Chancellor of Orleans (Jean de Sellier) a curse. Let him spew on his own seal and sprain his thumb.

CXII

He gives Messieurs the Auditors pannelling for their chamber and each a pierced chair if they will properly punish Macée d'Orleans, a prostitute who stole his virginity!—“Elle est une mauvaise ordure.”

CXIII

He gives to Maistre Françoys—an ecclesiastic—a Scotch throat-protector, inas-

Le Grand Testament

Car, quant receut chevalerie,
Il maugrea Dieu et saint George.
Parler n'en oyt, qu'il ne s'en rie,
Comme enragé, à pleine gorge.

CXIV

Item, à maistre Jehan Laurens,
Qui a les povres yeulx si rouges,
Par le peché de ses parens,
Qui beurent en barilz et courges,
Je donne l'envers de mes bouges,
Pour chascun matin les torcher...
S'il fust archevesque de Bourges,
Du cendal eust, mais il est cher.

CXV

Item, à maistre Jehan Cotart,
Mon procureur en Court d'Eglise,
Devoye environ ung patart
(A ceste heure je m'en advise),
Quant chicanner me feit Denise,
Disant que l'avoye mauldite:
Pour son ame, qu'és cieulx soit mise,
Ceste Oraison j'ay cy escripte.



The Great Testament

much as he cursed God and St. George when he put on chivalry, and always laughs when he hears them spoken of.

CXIV

Item. To Maistre Jehan Laurens, whose poor eyes are always red (from the sin of his parents, who were drunkards), he gives his hose to wipe them with every morning. If Jchan had been Archbishop of Bourges he would have had sendal for the purpose—but it is dear. Laurens was one of the judges who tried Guy Tabarie for theft.

CXV

Item. To Maistre Jehan Cotart, his procureur in the Court d'Eglise (Court of Arches), who defended him when an action was brought against him by a girl called Denise for having sworn at her (damned her soul, most probably) he gives this oraison.

Here follows "Ballade et Oraison." See p. 40.

(197)

Le Grand Testament

CXVI

Item, vueil que Germain de Merle
Desormais gouverne mon change,
Car de changer envys me mesle,
Pourveu que tousjours baille en change,
Soit à privé, soit à estrange,
Pour trois escus, six brettes targes,
Pour deux angelotz, ung grand ange:
Car amans doivent estre larges.

CXVII

Item, j'ay seeu, en ce voyage,
Que mes trois povres orphelins
Sont creus et deviennent en aage,
Et n'ont pas testes de belins,
Et qu'enfans d'icy à Salins
N'a mieulx sachans leur tour d'escole.
Or, par l'ordre des Mathelins,
Telle jeunesse n'est pas folle.

CXVIII

Si vueil qu'ilz voysent à l'estude.
Où? Chez maistre Pierre Richer.
Le *Donnet* est pour eulx trop rude:
Jà ne les y vueil empescher.

The Great Testament

CXVI

Item. He wills that Germain de Merle shall govern his bank, and that he shall give good change. For three écus, six Breton targes (a targe equalled one demiécu) ; for two demi-anges, one ange. Lovers should always be generous. Merle was a merchant of Paris.

CXVII

Item. He has seen that his three poor orphans (see *Petit Testament*, verses xxv-xxvi) are grown up and are not fools. They live at Salins, and there are no better scholars.

CXVIII

He wills that they should be sent to college under Pierre Richer. The grammar of Ælius Donatus (then in use at the Paris University) is too stiff for them. He does

Le Grand Testament

Ilz sçauront (je l'ayme plus cher):
Ave salus, tibi decus,
Sans plus grandes lettres chercher:
Tousjours n'ont pas clercs le dessus.

CXIX

Cecy estudient, et puis ho!
Plus proceder je leur deffens.
Quant d'entendre le grand *Credo*,
Trop fort il est pour telz enfans.
Mon grant tabart en deux je fendz:
Si vueil que la moitié s'en vende,
Pour eulx en achepter des flans,
Car jeunesse est ung peu friande.

CXX

Et vueil qu'ilz soient informez
En meurs, quoy que couste bature.
Chapperons auront enfermez,
Et les poulces soubz la ceinture,
Humbles à toute creature,
Disans: *Hen? Quoy? Il n'en est rien!*
Si diront gens, par adventure:
“Vez là enfans de lieu de bien”!

(200).

The Great Testament

not want to push them in learning too hard. Learned people in these times make little way in the world. Let them learn the *Ave salus, tibi decus.*

CXIX

That is enough. The *Grand Credo* is too hard for boys. He would tear his long tabard in two and sell half of it to buy them custards—children love sweets.

CXX

He would have them taught good manners. They must wear close hoods and keep their thumbs in their girdles, making reply, “Hen? Quoy? Il n’en est rien.” So that folk may say, “These are well bred boys.”

Le Grand Testament

CXXI

Item, à mes povres clergeons,
Auxquelz mes tiltres je resigne,
Beaulx enfans et droictz comme jonsc,
Les voyans, je m'en dessaisine,
Et, sans recevoir, leur assigne,
Seur comme qui l'auroit en paulme,
A ung certain jour que l'on signe,
Sur l'hostel de Gueutry Guillaume.

CXXII

Quoy que jeunes et esbatans
Soyent, en rien ne me desplaist.
Dedans vingt, trente ou quarante ans,
Bien autres seront, se Dieu plaist.
Il faict mal, qui ne leur complaist:
Ils sont tresbeaux enfants et gents,
Et qui les bat ou fiert fol est,
Car enfans si deviennent gens.

CXXIII

Les bourses des Dix-et-huict clercs
Auront, je m'y vueil travailler:
Pas ilz ne dorment comme lerz,
Qui trois mois sont sans resveiller.

(202)

The Great Testament

CXXI

Item. To his poor clerks (see *Petit Testament*, verse xxviii) he gives the rent of the pillory.

CXXII

They will get on all right and become men. Though they are now young and rackety, twenty, thirty, or forty years will make a lot of difference. Whoever beats or abuses them is a fool.

CXXIII

They will have the purses of the eighteen clerks (become members of the Collège des Dix-huit founded for poor students

Le Grand Testament

Au fort, triste est le sommeiller
Que faict jeune cuer en jeunesse,
Tant qu'enfin luy faille veiller,
Quant reposer deust en viellesse.

cxxiv

Cy en rescris au Collateur
Lettres semblables ou pareilles:
Or prient pour leur bienfaicteur,
Ou qu'on leur tire les oreilles.
Aucunes gens ont grans merveilles
Que tant m'encline envers ces deux;
Mais, foy que doy, festes et veilles,
Oncques ne vey les meres d'eulx!

cxxv

Item, donne à Michault Culdou,
Et à sire Charlot Taranne,
Cent solz (s'ilz demandent prins où,
Ne leur chaille, ils viendront de manne),
Et unes bottes de basanne,
Autant empeigne que semelle,
Pourveu qu'ilz me saulveront Jehanne,
Et autant une autre comme elle.

The Great Testament

near the Collége de Cluny). They are not like dormice, that sleep away their time. Let not youth sleep, else age may have to keep awake.

CXXIV

Therefore he writes to the Collateur (Almoner of the Collége des Dix-huit) to see that they pray for their benefactor. If not, to pull their ears. People wonder why he takes such an interest in them. He swears he has never even seen their mothers!

CXXV

Item. He gives to Michault Culdou and to Charlot Taranne a hundred sols, also a pair of boots of tanned leather, on condition that they have nothing to do with Jehanne (Jehanne de Bretagne? see verse CXLI) or any one like her.

Le Grand Testament

CXXVI

Item, au seigneur de Grigny,
Auquel jadis laissay Vicestre,
Je donne la tour de Billy,
Pourveu (se huys y a ne fenestre
Qui soit de debout ne en estre)
Qu'il mette tresbien tout en poinct,
Face argent, à dextre, à senestre:
Il m'en fault, et il n'en a point.

CXXVII

Item, à Thibault de la Garde:
Thibault? Je mentz, il a nom Jehan.
Que luy donray-je, que ne perde?
Assez ay perdu tout cest an.
Dieu le vueille pouvoir, *amen!* . . .
Le barilet? Par m'ame, voyre!
Genevoys est plus ancien,
Et a plus beau nez pour y boyre.

CXXVIII

Item, je donne à Basanyer,
Notaire et greffier criminel,
De giroffle plain ung panyer,
Prins chez maistre Jehan de Ruel;

The Great Testament

CXXVI

Item. To the Seigneur de Grigny (to whom, in the *Petit Testament*, he left Bicêtre) he gives the Tour de Billy (an old powder-magazine now in ruins on the Seine bank, close to the Hôtel St. Pol) on the condition that he patches it up.

CXXVII

Item. To Thibault de la Garde, whose real name is John (see *Petit Testament*, verse xxxiii). He gives nothing; can't afford it. (Thibault is the before-mentioned grocer of La Garde.) He is supposed in reality to be Petit Thibault, otherwise known as Petit Jean, the robber.

CXXVIII

Item. He gives to Bassanyer, Notary et greffier criminel (see *Petit Testament*, verse xxI) a basket of cloves stolen by Villon from the shop of Jehan de Ruel.

Le Grand Testament

Tant à Mautainct, tant à Resnel; -
Et, avec ce don de giroffle,
Servir, de cuer gent et ysnel,
Le seigneur qui sert saint Cristofle:

CXXIX

Auquel ceste Ballade donne,
Pour sa dame, qui tous biens a.
S'amours ainsi tous ne guerdonne,
Je ne m'ebahys de cela,
Car au Pas conquerester l'ala,
Que tint René, roy de Cecille,
Où si bien fist et peu parla
Qu'onceques Hector feit, ne Troïle.



CXXX

Item, à sire Jehan Perdryer,
Riens, n'à Françoys, son second frere,
S'ils m'ont tousjours voulu aydier,
Et de leurs biens faire confrere,
Combien que Françoys, mon compere,
Langues cuisans, flambans et rouges,
My commandement, my priere,
Me recommanda fort à Bourges.

The Great Testament

He gives the same to Mautainct and Resnel that they may serve well the seigneur who serves Saint Christopher. (Jehan de Ruel is the same Thibault de la Garde; he had a grocer's shop at Rueil.) The seigneur in question was Robert d'Estouteville.

CXXIX

To this seigneur, who gained his bride at the tournament organised by King René, he dedicates the following ballade—of which the two first verses give the acrostic—Ambroise de Lorede. Poor Ambroise died in 1468, “Espoused for this do we two meet.”

Here follows the ballade. See p. 42.

CXXX

Item. He gives nothing to Sire Jehan Perdryer, and nothing to Françoys, his brother. If they have helped him at times they have slanderous tongues (“flambans et rouges”). They were his accomplices, and denounced him at Bourges. Hence his imprisonment.

Le Grand Testament

CXXXI

Si aille veoir, en Taillevent,
Ou chapitre de fricassure,
Tout au long, derriere et devant,
Lequel n'en parle jus ne sure.
Mais Macquaire, je vous asseure,
Atout le poil cuysant ung dyable,
Affin que sentist bon l'arsure,
Ce *Recipe* m'escript, sans fable.



CXXXII

Item, à maistre Andry Courault,
Les *Contredictz Franc-Gontier* mande.
Quant du Tyrant seant en hault,
A cestuy-là rien ne demande.
Le Saige ne veult que contende,
Contre puissant, povre homme las,
Affin que ses filez ne tende
Et que ne tresbuche en ses laqs.

(210)

The Great Testament

CXXXI

Let them go and read in Taillevent (the book by Taillevent, chief cook to the King of France) the chapter on fricassees to see if they can find out Villon's method of stewing them. No, it was Macquaire (Saint Maçaire) whom he once met cooking a devil that gave him the following. So we may imagine.

Here follows the ballade. See Appendix.

CXXXII

Item. To Maistre Andry Courault he gives the *Contredictz Franc-Gontier* (a little book vaunting the simple life and entitled *Les Ditz de Franc Gontier*, produced a counterblast called the *Contredictz de Franc-Gontier*, in which the life of a certain seigneur was caricatured). Villon, wiser, uses in his ballade only the life of a fat priest. It does not do to cross the path of great people.

Le Grand Testament

CXXXIII

Gontier ne crains: il n'a nulz hommes,
Et mieulx que moy n'est herité.
Mais en ce debat cy nous sommes,
Car il loue sa povreté:
Estre povre, yver et esté,
A felicité il reputé:
Ce que tiens à malheureté.
Lequel à tort? Or en dispute.



CXXXIV

Item, pource que scait la Bible
Madamoyselle de Bruyeres,
Donne prescher lors l'Evangile
A elle et à ses bachelieres,
Pour retraire ces villotieres
Qui ont le bec si affilé,
Mais que ce soit hors cymetieres:
Trop bien au marché au filé.



The Great Testament

CXXXIII

Gontier praises poverty; Villon cries out against it. He leaves it to the reader to decide which is right. Gontier, by the way, was Philippe de Vitry, Bishop of Meaux. The *Contredictz* were written by Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly, Chancellor of the University of Paris.

Here follows the ballade. See p. 44.

CXXXIV

Item. He bestows the following ballade upon Madamoyselle de Bruyeres and her kind. That is to say, Isabelle de Bruyères, widow of Regnauld de Thumery. This is probably the Isabeau of Villon's tragedy.

Here follows "The Ballade Des Femmes de Paris."
See p. 47.

Le Grand Testament

CXXXV

Regarde-m'en deux, trois, assises
Sur le bas du ploy de leurs robes,
En ces monstiers, en ces eglises:
Tire-toy prés, et ne t'en hobes;
Tu trouveras là que Macrobes
Oncques ne fist fels jugemens;
Entens quelque chose en desrobes:
Ce sont fous beaulx enseignemens.

CXXXVI

Item, et au mont de Montmartre,
Qui est ung lieu moult ancien,
Je luy donne et adjoins le tertre
Qu'on dit le mont Valerien,
Et, oultre plus, ung quartier d'an
Du pardon qu'apportay de Romme:
Si y va maint bon chrestian
Veoir l'abbaye où il n'entre homme.

CXXXVII

Item, à varletz, chambrieres
(De bons hostelz riens ne me nuyst)
Faisans tartes, flans et goyeres,
Et grant ravaudiz à minuict:

The Great Testament

CXXXV

Look at them seated in convents and churches, on the edges of their robes by two and three—steal close to them, and you will hear judgments which Macrobius could not give. (He refers to the works of Macrobius entitled, *Somnium Scipionis* and the *Saturnalia*, first printed by Jenson at Venice in 1472.)

CXXXVI

Item. To Montmartre he gives Mont Valerian. Let them be joined. There was a convent on each hill, and each convent was built on the ruins of a pagan temple—and to both he will give for three months the pardon he has brought from Rome. He judges that many men will thus be found on the premises.

CXXXVII

Item. To the servants, male and female, of good hostels he gives all sorts of good food and revelry.

Le Grand Testament

Riens n'y font sept pintes ne huict,
Tant que gisent seigneur et dame;
Puis aprés, sans mener grant bruyt,
Ont chascune nuict une femme.

CXXXVIII

Item, et à filles de bien,
Qui ont peres, meres et antes,
Par m'ame! je ne donne rien,
Car j'ay tout donné aux servantes,
Mais ell' seront de peu contentes:
Grant bien leur feissent maintz lopir
Aux povres filles advenantes,
Qui se perdent aux Jacopins.

CXXXIX

Aux Celestins et aux Chartreux,
Quoyque vie meinent estroicte,
Si ont-ilz largement entre eulx,
Dont povres filles ont souffrette:
Tesmoing Jaqueline et Perrette,
Et Isabeau, qui dit: *Enné!*
Puisqu'elles ont telle disette,
A peine en seroit-on damné.

The Great Testament

CXXXVIII

Item. To good girls possessing fathers, mothers, and aunts, he gives nothing. He has nothing to give, as he has given everything to the servants, who are always content with little. Yet they deserve something, if only the leavings of the Jacobins. (He refers to the rich establishment of the Jacobins in the rue St. Jacques.)

CXXXIX

He complains that the rich houses of the religious orders (Celestins and Chartreux included) indulge in food that the poor girls know nothing of. Poor Jaqueline and Perrette and Isabeau, always hungry—surely after such a life in this world they will escape damnation in the next!

Le Grand Testament

CXL

Item, à la grosse Margot,
Tresdoulce face et pourtraicture,
Foy que doy, *Belare Bigod*,
Assez devote creature:
Je l'ayme de propre nature,
Et elle moy, la doulce sade.
Qui la trouvera d'aventure,
Qu'on luy lise ceste Ballade.

CXLI

Item, à Marion l'Ydolle,
Et la grant Jehanne de Bretaigne,
Donne tenir publique escolle,
Où l'escolier le maistre enseigne.
Lieu n'est où ce marché ne tienne,
Sinon en la geolle de Mehun;
De quoy je dy: Fy de l'enseigne,
Puisque l'ouvrage est si commun!

The Great Testament

CXL

Item. To fat Margot, fair to look at,
and devout enough—he gives—this ballade.

Here follows "The Ballade of Villon and La Grosse Margot." See Appendix.

CXLI

Item. To Marion l'Ydolle (The Statue,
Filles de joie were nicknamed from their
appearance) and big Joan of Brittany he
gives the right to keep a public school (!)
where the scholars shall teach the masters—
a common thing except in Mehun jail.

Le Grand Testament

CXLII

Item, à Noë le Jolys,
Autre chose je ne luy donne,
Fors plain poing d'osiers frez cueilliz
En mon jardin: je l'abandonne.
Chastoy est une belle aulmosne:
Ame n'en doit estre marry.
Unze vingtz coups luy en erdonne,
Par les mains de maistre Henry.

CXLIII

Item, ne sçay que à l'Hostel-Dieu
Donner, n'aux povres hospitaux:
Bourdes n'ont icy temps ne lieu,
Car povres gens ont assez maulx.
Chascun leur envoye leurs aulx.
Les Mandians ont eu mon oye.
Au fort, ilz en auront les os:
A menues gens menue moñnoye.

CXLIV

Item, je donne à mon barbier,
Qui se nomme Colin Galerne,
Prés voysin d'Angelot l'Herbier,
Ung gros glasson... Prins où? En
Marne,

The Great Testament

CXLII

Item. To Noë le Jolys—the man who beat him at the order of Katherine de Vaucelles—he gives nothing but a handful of osiers from his garden, the said Noë to be thrashed with the osiers at the hands of Henri Cousin (the sworn tormentor of the Provostry of Paris).

CXLIII

Item. He does not know what to leave to the Hôtel-Dieu. In other words, he does not care to jest about sick people who have troubles enough and to spare. Let them have the leavings of the rich tables. The Mendicants have had his goose; there is nothing for the hospitals but the bones. To poor people little mercy.

CXLIV

He gives to his barber, Colin Galerne, who lives near Angelot, the herbalist, a big lump of ice from the Marne, to put

Le Grand Testament

Affin qu'à son ayse s'yverne.
De l'estomach le tienne prés.
Se l'yver ainsi se gouverne,
Il n'aura chauld l'esté d'aprés.

CXLV

Item, rien aux Enfans-Trouvez,
Mais les perduz fault que console,
Si doivent estre retrouvez,
Par droict, chez Marion l'Ydolle,
Une leçon de mon escolle
Leur liray, qui ne dure guiere.
Teste n'ayent dure ne folle,
Mais escoutent: c'est la darniere!



CXLVI

A vous parle, compaings de galles,
Qui estes de tous bons accords:
Gardez-vous tous de ce mau hasles,
Qui noircist gens quand ilz sont mortz;
Eschevez-le, c'est ung mal mors;
Passez-vous au mieulx que pourrez,
Et, pour Dieu, soyez tous recors
Qu'une fois viendra que mourrez.

(222)

The Great Testament

on his stomach (to match his cold heart?). After that he won't bother about seasonal temperature. Galerne was also churchwarden at Saint-Germain-le-Vieux, one of the churches on the cité.

CXLV

He leaves nothing to the “Enfans-Trouvez”; but to the Lost Ones who frequent Marion l’Ydolle he will read the following lesson in the form of a ballade.

Here follows “Ballade de Villon aux Enfans Perdus” and “Ballade de Bonne Doctrine.” See pp. 49, 51.

CXLVI

He calls on his evil companions to look out for the gallows. “Beware of the sun that blackens men when they are dead.”

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CXLVII

Item, je donne aux Quinze-Vingtz,
Qu'autant vauldroit nommer Trois-Cens,
De Paris, non pas de Provins,
Car à eux tenu je me sens;
Ilz auront, et je m'y consens,
Sans leur estui, mes grans lunettes,
Pour mettre à part, aux Innocens,
Les gens de bien des deshonestes.

CXLVIII

Icy n'y a ne rys ne jeu!
Que leur vault avoir eu chevances,
N'en grans lietz de parement geu,
Engloutir vin en grosses pances,
Mener joye, festes et dances,
Et de ce prest estre à toute heure?
Tantost faillent telles plaisances,
Et la coulpe si en demeure.

CXLIX

Quand je considere ces testes
Entassées en ces charniers,
Tous furent maistres des requestes,
Au moins de la Chambre aux Deniers,

The Great Testament

CXLVII

Item. He gives to the Quinze-Vingtz of Paris, not of Provins (hospital for the blind) his spectacles, that they may pick out the bad from the good in the Cemetery of the Innocents. (Prompsault thinks that the Quinze-Vingtz of Provins was a cabaret.) The Quinze-Vingtz were bound to supply a certain number of mourners to the funerals in the cemetery of the Innocents.

CXLVIII

There (in the cemetery) is neither laughter nor play, no "beds of honour," no fêtes nor dances; nothing remains. But sin does not die.

CXLIX

When he considers all those lying here, lords and poor folk, bishops and basket-

Le Grand Testament

Ou tous furent porte-paniers,
Autant puis l'ung que l'autre dire:
Car, d'evesques ou lanterniers,
Je n'y congnois rien à redire.

CL

Et icelles qui s'inclinoient
Unes contre autres en leurs vies,
Desquelles les unes regnoient,
Des autres craintes et servies:
Là les voy toutes assouvies,
Ensemble en ung tas mesle-pesle.
Seigneuries leur sont ravies:
Clerc ne maistre ne s'y appelle.

CLI

Or sont-ilz mortz, Dieu ayt leurs ames!
Quant est des corps, liz sont pourriz.
Ayent esté seigneurs ou dames,
Souef et tendrement nourriz
De cresme, fromentée ou riz,
Leurs os sont declinez en pouldre,
Auxquelz ne chault d'eshatz, ne riz...
Plaise au doulx Jesus les absouldre!

The Great Testament

carriers, he sees that their corpses are just the same.

CL

People, too, who once bowed to each other, princesses and servants—all are heaped together; master or clerk, there is no appeal.

CLI

Now they are dead God takes their souls. Seigneurs and dames, soft and tenderly nourished, on cream, frumenty, and rice—all mouldering to dust. May Christ absolve them.

Le Grand Testament

CLII

Aux trespassez je fais ce Lays,
Et icelluy je communique
A regentz, courtz, sieges et plaidz,
Hayneurs d'avarice l'inique,
Lesquelz pour la chose publique
Se seichent les os et les corps:
De Dieu et de saint Dominique
Soient absolvz, quand ilz seront mortz!

CLIII

Item, rien a Jaques Cardon
(Car rien plus n'ay que soit honneste,
Non pas que le jette à bandon),
Sinon ceste bergeronnette:
S'elle eust le chant *Marionnette*,
Faict pour Marion la Peau-Tarde,
Ou de *Ouvrez vostre huys, Guillemette*,
Elle allast bien à la moustarde.



CLIV

Item, donne à maistre Lomer,
Comme extraict que je suis de fée,
Qu'il soit bien amé; mais, d'amer
Fille en chief ou femme coëffée,

(228).

The Great Testament

CLII

He makes this lay for them.

CLIII

He leaves nothing to Jacques Cardon, except this rondel. Jacques Cardon was a merchant draper and hosier. He lived in the Place Maubert.

Here follows rondel. See p. 53.

CLIV

This gift he leaves to Maistre Lomer: that he shall be well loved but incapable of returning love, so that he may not

(229)

Le Grand Testament

Ja n'en ait la teste eschauffée,
Et qu'il ne luy couste une noix
Faire au soir cent fois la faffée.
En despit d'Ogier le Danois.

CLV

Item, donne aux amans enfermes,
Oultre le Lay Alain Chartier,
A leur chevetz, de pleurs et lermes
Trestout fin plain ung benoistier,
Et ung petit brin d'esglantier,
En tout temps verd, pour gouppillon,
Pourveu qu'ilz diront ung *Psaultier*
Pour l'ame du povre Villon.

CLVI

Item, à maistre Jaques James,
Qui se tue d'amasser biens,
Donne fiancer tant de femmes
Qu'il vouldra; mais d'espouser, riens.
Pour qui amasse-il? Pour les siens.
Il ne plaintet, fors que ses morceaulx.
Ce qui fut aux truyes, je tiens
Qu'il doit de droit estre aux pourceaulx.

The Great Testament

be fooled—for women may be easily bought, despite the words of Holgar the Dane.

CLV

He gives to love-sick ones Alain Char-tier's Lay (*l'Hôpital d'amour?*) a little bowl of tears, and a branch of eglantine always fresh, for a sprinkler, on condition that they recite a Psalter for the soul of poor Villon.

CLVI

Item. To Maistre Jaques James, who is killing himself making money, he gives all the women he wants, but no wife. Let the money made from women go back to women. (A nice commentary on the life of Jaques James!)

Le Grand Testament

CLVII

Item, le Camus, seneschal,
Qui une fois paya mes debtas,
En recompense, mareschal
Sera, pour ferrer ses canettes.
Je luy envoye ces sornettes
Pour soy desennuyer; combien,
Si veult, face-en des alumettes.
De bien chanter s'ennuye-on bien.

CLVIII

Item, au Chevalier du Guet
Je donne deux beaulx petiz pages,
Philippot et le gros marquet,
Qui ont servy (dont sont plus sages),
La plus grant partie de leurs aages,
Tristan, prevost des mareschaulx.
Helas, s'ilz sont cassez de gaiges,
Aller leur fauldra tous deschaulx!

CLIX

Item, à Chappelain je laisse
Ma chapelle à simple tonsure,
Chargée d'une seiche messe,
Où il ne fault pas grant lecture.

The Great Testament

CLVII

Unto Camus the Seneschal, who once paid his debts, he bequeaths the right of shoeing not only horses, but ducks and geese —let him laugh at this fun, or make a fire-lighter of it. The ducks referred to by Villon were probably human ducks. The rue des Canettes, in the Faubourg St. Germain, was named after its frequenters.

CLVIII

To the Captain of the Watch he gives two pretty pages Philipot and fat Marquet. They have already served Tristan Prevost des Mareschaux (Tristan the Hermit; see Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris*). If they should lose their engagement they must go barefooted. Tristan was provost of the Hôtel du Roi.

CLIX

Item. He leaves to Chappelain his "chapelle à simple tonsure," charging him only to say a low mass. Villon would

Le Grand Testament

Resigné luy eusse ma cure,
Mais point ne veult de charge d'ames;
De confesser, ce dit, n'a cure,
Sinon chambrieres et dames.

CLX

Pource que sçait bien mon entente,
Jehan de Calays, honnable homme,
Qui ne me veit, des ans a trente,
Et ne sçait comment je me nomme;
De tout ce Testament, en somme,
Saucune y a difficulté,
Oster jusqu'au rez d'une pomme,
Je luy en donne faculté.

CLXI

De le glosier et commenter,
De le diffinir ou prescrire,
Diminuer ou augmenter;
De le canceller ou transcrire
De sa main, ne sceust-il escripre;
Interpreter, et donner sens,
A son plaisir, meilleur ou pire:
A tout cecy je m'y consens.

The Great Testament

have given him his cure of souls, but he only cares for confessing women ("chambrieres et dames").

CLX

He gives Jehan de Calais, who has not seen him for thirty years, the right to revise this Testament. Calais was a rich bourgeois, he had for wife a lady named Denise, probably the same Denise whose soul Villon damned. See verse cxv, p. 196.

CLXI

To glose and comment upon it, diminish or augment, scratch out or transcribe, and interpret according to his will—hinting that Jehan is no scribe.

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CLXII

Et s'aucun, dont n'ay congnoissance,
Estoit allé de mort à vie,
Audict Calais donne puissance,
Affin que l'ordre soit suyvie
Et mon ordonnance assouvie,
Que ceste aulmosne ailleurs transporte,
Sans se l'appliquer par envie:
A son ame je m'en rapporte.

CLXIII

Item, j'ordonne à Saincte-Avoye,
Et non ailleurs, ma sepulture;
Et, affin que chascun me voye,
Non pas en chair, mais en paincture,
Que l'on tire mon estature
D'ancre, s'il ne coustoit trop cher.
De tumbel? Rien: je n'en ay cure,
Car il greveroit le plancher.

CLXIV

Item, vueil qu'autour de ma fosse,
Ce que s'ensuyt, sans autre histoire,
Soit escript, en lettre assez grosse;
Et qui n'auroit point d'escriptoire,

The Great Testament

CLXII

The aforesaid Calais to see all gifts properly apportioned and distributed, and to take nothing for himself.

CLXIII

He orders that his body shall be buried at Sainte-Avoye (the convent of the Filles Sainte-Avoye; the chapel of this convent had no graveyard) and that his monument be a picture done in ink. He wants no tomb of stone, it would break the floor down. The chapel of the Filles Sainte-Avoye was situated on the second floor of the building.

CLXIV

Item. Let there be written over his grave, in large letters, in charcoal—

Le Grand Testament

De charbon soit, ou pierre noire,
Sans en rien entamer le plastre
(Au moins sera de moy memoire,
Telle qu'il est d'ung bon folastre) :

Epitaphe

CY GIST ET DORT, EN CE SOLLIER,
QU'AMOUR OCCIST DE SON RAILLON,
UNG POVRE PETIT ESCOLLIER,
QUI FUT NOMMÉ FRANÇOIS VILLON.
ONCQUES DE TERRE N'EUT SILLON.
IL DONNA TOUT, CHASCUN LE SCET:
TABLE, TRETTEAU ET CORBILLON.
POUR DIEU, DICTES-EN CE VERSET.



CLXV

Item, je vueil qu'on sonne en branle
Le gros beffroy, qui n'est de verre,
Combien que cuer n'est qui ne tremble
Quand de sonner est à son erre.
Sonné a mainte belle guerre,
Le temps passé, chascun le scet:
Fussent gens d'armes ou tonnerre,
Au son de luy tout mal cessoit.

The Great Testament

taking care not to break the plaster—the following.

Here follow epitaph and rondel. See pp. 54, 55.

CLXV

Item. He orders that they toll for him “le gros beffroy” (the biggest bell of Notre-Dame, only sounded on the death of kings and other great occasions). This great bell was given to Notre Dame by Jean de Montaigue in the year 1400.

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CLXVI

Les sonneurs auront quatre miches,
Et, se c'est peu, demy-douzaine,
Autant qu'en donnent les plus riches:
Mais ell'seront de saintet Estienne.
Vollant est homme de grant paine:
L'ung en sera. Quand j'y regarde,
Il en vivra une sepmaine.
Et l'autre? Au fort, Jehan de la Garde.

CLXVII

Pour tout ce fournir et parfaire,
J'ordonne mes executeurs,
Auxquelz faict bon avoir affaire,
Et contentent bien leurs debteurs.
Ilz ne sont pas trop grans venteurs,
Et ont bien de quoy, Dieu mercys!
De ce faict seront directeurs...
Escrays: je t'en nommeray six.

CLXVIII

C'est maistre Martin Bellefaye,
Lieutenant du cas criminel.
Qui sera l'autre? J'y pensoye:
Ce sera sire Colombel.

The Great Testament

CLXVI

He orders four loaves to be given to the ringers; or, if that is too little, half a dozen. Let Vollant and Jehan de la Garde share in this. (The number of loaves distributed was according to the wealth of deceased.)

CLXVII

He now proceeds to give the names of his executors, all honest men. They are six in number.

CLXVIII

They are: First, Maistre Martin Belle-

Le Grand Testament

S'il luy plaist, et il luy est bel,
Il entreprendra ceste charge,
Et l'autre? Michel Jouvenel.
Ces trois seulz, et pour tout, j'en charge.

CLXIX

Mais, au cas qu'ilz s'en excusassent,
En redoubtant les premiers frais,
Ou totalement recussasent,
Ceulx qui s'ensuivent cy-aprés
J'institue, gens de bien trés:
Philippe Brun, noble escuyer,
Et l'autre, son voisín d'emprés,
Cy est maistre Jaques Raguyer.

CLXX

Et l'autre, maistre Jaques James:
Trois hommes de bien et d'honneur,
Desirans de saulver leurs ames,
Et craignans Dieu Nostre Seigneur,
Car plus tost y metront du leur
Que ceste ordonnance ne baillent.
Point n'auront de contrerooleur,
Mais à leur seul plaisir en taillent.

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faye, Lieutenant du cas criminel; next, sire Colombel; thirdly, Michel Jouvenel. Belle-faye became councillor of the Parliament of Paris; he died in 1502. Guillaume Colombel became councillor of the king; he died in 1475. Michel Jouvenel, baily of Troyes, died in 1470.

CLXIX

In case these fail, he names Philippe Brun and Maistre Jaques Raguyer. Philippe Brun, or Bruneau, was the son of Etienne Bruneau. Raguyer was a haunter of the Pomme de Pin, a great drinker, became Bishop of Troyes, and died in 1518.

CLXX

And, for a third, Maistre Jaques James. Three men of honour are these; so honest are they that Villon gives them free rein without control over his affairs. (Perhaps the most damning testimonial ever received by three men.)

Le Grand Testament

CLXXI

Des testamens, qu'en dit le Maistre?
De mon faict n'aura *quid ne quod*;
Mais ce sera ung jeune prebstre,
Qui se nomme Colas Tacot.
Voualentiers beusse à son escot,
Et qu'il me coustast ma cornette!
S'il sceust jouer en ung trippot,
Il eust de moy le Trou Perrette.

CLXXII

Quant au regard du luminaire,
Guillaume du Ru j'y commetz:
Pour porter les coings du suaire,
Aux executeurs le remetz.
Trop plus mal me font qu'onques mais
Penil, cheveulx, barbe, sourcilz.
Mal me presse; est temps desormais
Que crie à toutes gens merciz.



The Great Testament

CLXXI

He leaves nothing to the Maistre des Testaments; let Colas Tacot (a young priest) have the fee. The end of this verse is obscure.

CLXXII

Let Guillaume du Ru see to the lighting of the chapel. Let his executors choose the pall-bearers.

And now, being in great pain. "Penil" hair, beard, and eyebrows, the time has come to cry to all men mercy:

"Que crie à toutes gens merciz."





APPENDIX

L'Epitaphe en forme de ballade

Que fait Villon pour luy et ses compagnons, s'attendant estre pendu avec eulx.

FRERES humains, qui après nous vivez,
N'ayez les cueurs contre nous endurcis,
Car, se pitié de nous povres avez,
Dieu en aura plus tost de vous merciz.
Vous nous voyez cy attachez cinq, six.
Quant de la chair, que trop avons nourrie,
Elle est pieça devorée et pourrie,
Et nous, les os, devenons cendre et pouldre.
De nostre mal personne ne s'en rie,
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre.

Se vous clamons, freres, pas n'en devez
Avoir desdaing, quoique fusmes occis
Par justice. Toutesfois, vous seavez
Que tous les hommes n'ont pas bon sens assis;
Intercedez doncques, de cuer rassis,
Envers le Filz de la Vierge Marie,
Que sa grace ne soit pour nous tarie,
Nous préservant de l'infernale fouldre.
Nous sommes morts, ame ne nous harie;
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre.

L'Epitaphe en forme de ballade

La pluye nous a debuez et lavez,
Et le soleil dessechcz et noircis;
Pies, corbeaulx, nous ont les yeux cavez,
Et arrachez la barbe et les sourcilz.
Jamais, nul temps, nous ne sommes assis;
Puis ça, puis là, comme le vent varie,
A son plaisir, sans cesser, nous charie,
Plus becquetez d'oyseaulx que dez à couldre.
Ne soyez donc de nostre confrairie,
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre

ENVOI

Prince JESUS, qui sur tous seigneurie,
Garde qu'Enfer n'ayt de nous la maistrie.
A luy n'ayons que faire ne que souldre.
Hommes, icy, n'usez de mocquerie,
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre.

Ballade des dames du temps jadis

DICTES-MOY où n'en quel pays,
Est Flora, la belle Romaine?
Archipiade, ne Thaïs,
Qui fut sa cousine germaine?
Echo, parlant quand bruyt on maine
Dessus riviere ou sus estan,
Qui beaulté eut trop plus qu'humaine?...
Mais où sont les neiges d'antan!

Où est la tres-sage Heloïs,
Pour qui fut chastré et puis moyne
Pierre Esbaillart, à Sainct-Denys?
Pour son amour eut cest essoyne.
Semblablement, où est la Royne
Qui commanda que Buridan
Fust jetté en ung sac en Seine?...
Mais où sont les neiges d'antan!

La royne Blanche comme ung lys,
Qui chantoit à voix de seraine,
Berthe au grand pied, Beatrix, Allys,
Haremburges, qui tint le Mayne,

Ballade

Et Jehanne, la bonne Lorraine,
Qu'Anglois bruslerent à Rouen:
Où sont-ilz, Vierge souveraine? ...
Mais où sont les neiges d'antan!

ENVOI

Prince, n'enquerez, de sepmaine,
Où elles sont, ne de cest an,
Car ce refrain le vous remaine:
Mais où sont les neiges d'antan!

*Ballade des seigneurs du temps
jadis, suivant le propos pre-
cedent*

QUOI plus! Où est le tiers Calixte,
Dernier decedé de ce nom,
Qui quatre ans tint le Papaliste?
Alphonse, le roy d'Aragon,
Le gracieux duc de Bourbon,
Et Artus, le duc de Bretaigne,
Et Charles septiesme, le Bon?...
Mais où est le preux Charlemaigne!

Semblablement, le roy Scotiste,
Qui demy-face eut, ce dit-on,
Vermeille comme une amathiste
Depuis le front jusqu'au menton?
Le Roy de Chypre, de renom,
Helas! et le bon Roy d'Espaigne,
Duquel je ne sçay pas le nom?...
Mais où est le preux Charlemaigne?

D'en plus parler je me desiste:
Ce n'est que toute abusion.
Il n'est qui contre mort resiste,
Ne qui treuve provision.

Ballade

Encor fais une question:
Lancelot, le roy de Behaigne,
Où est-il? Où est son tayon?...
Mais où est le preux Charlemaigne!

ENVOI

Où est Clauquin, le bon Breton?
Où le comte Daulphin d'Auvergne,
Et le bon feu duc d'Alençon?...
Mais où est le preux Charlemaigne!

*Ballade à ce propos, en vieil
françois*

MAIS où sont ly sainetz Apostoles,
D'aulbes vestuz, d'amictz coeffez,
Qui sont cincts de sainctes estoles,
Dont par le col prent ly mauffez,
De matalent tout eschauffez?
Aussi bien meurt filz que servans,
De ceste vie sont bouffez:
Autant en emporte ly vens.

Voire, ou soit de Constantinobles
L'Emperier aux poings dorez,
Ou de France ly Roy tres-nobles,
Sur tous autres roys decorez,
Qui, pour ly grant Dieux adorcez,
Bastist eglises et convens?
S'en son temps il fut honorez,
Autant en emporte ly vens.

Où sont de Vienne et de Grenobles
Ly Daulphin, ly preux, ly senez?
Où de Dijon, Sallins et Dolles,
Ly sires et ly filz aisnez?

Ballade

Où (autant de leurs gens prenez)
Heraulx, trompettes, poursuyvans?
Ont-ils bien bouté soubz le nez?...
Autant en emporte ly vens.

ENVOI

Princes à mort sont destinez,
Comme les plus povres vivans:
S'ils en sont courcez ou tennez,
Autant en emporte ly vens.

Les Regrets de la belle heaulmiere

Ja Parvenue a Vieillesse

ADVIS m'est que j'oy regrettter
La belle qui fut heaulmiere,
Soy jeune fille souhaitter
Et parler en ceste maniere:
"Ha! viellesse felonne et fiere,
Pourquoys m'as si tost abatue?
Qui me tient que je ne me fiere,
Et qu'à ce coup je ne me tue?"

"Tollu m'as ma haulte franchise,
Que beaulté m'avoit ordonné
Sur clercz, marchans et gens d'Eglise:
Car alors n'estoit homme né
Qui tout le sien ne m'eust donné,
Quoy qu'il en fust des repentailles,
Mais que luy eusse abandonné
Ce que reffusent truandailles.

"A maint homme l'ay reffusé
(Qui n'estoit à moy grand saigesse),
Pour l'amour d'ung garson rusé,
A qui je en faisoie largesse.

Les Regrets

A qui que je feisse finesse,
Par m'ame, je l'amoye bien!
Or ne me faisoit que rudesse,
Et ne m'amoit que pour le mien.

"Si ne me sceut tant detrayner,
Fouller aux piedz, que ne l'aymasse,
Et m'eust-il faict les rains trayner,
S'il m'eust dict que je le baisasse
Et que tous mes maux oubliasse,
Le glouton, de mal entaché,
M'embrassoit... J'en suis bien plus grasse!
Que m'en reste-t-il? Honte et peché.

"Or il est mort, passé vingt ans,
Et je remains vielle chenue.
Quand je pense, las! au bon temps,
Quelle fus, quelle devenue,
Quand me regarde toute nue,
Et je me voy si treschangée,
Povre, seiche, maigre, menue,
Je suis presque toute enragée.

"Qu'est devenu ce front poly,
Ces cheveux blonds, sourcilz voultyz,
Grande entr'œil, et regard joly,
Dont prenoye les plus subtilz,
Ce beau nez droit, grant ne petiz,
Ces petites jointes oreilles,
Menton fourchu, cler vis traictis,
Et ces belles levres vermeilles?

Les Regrets

"Ces gentes espaules ménues,
Ces bras longs et ces mains traictisses,
Petis tetins, hanches charnues,
Eslevées, propres, faictisses
A tenir amoureuses lysses,
Ces larges reins, ce sadinet,
Assis sur grosses fermes cuyses,
Dedans son joly jardinet?"

"Le front ridé, les cheveulx gris,
Les sourcilz cheuz, les yeulx estains,
Qui faisoient regars et ris,
Dont maintz marchans furent attains,
Nez courbé, de beaulté loingtains,
Orcilles pendans et moussues,
Le vis pally, mort et destains,
Menton foneé, joues peaussues:

"C'est d'humaine beaulté l'yssues!
Les bras courts et les mains contraictes,
Les espaulles toutes bossues,
Mammelles, quoy! toutes retraictes,
Telles les hanches que les tettes.
Du sadinet, fy! Quand des cuyses,
Cuyses ne sont plus, mais cuyssettes
Grivelées comme saulcisses.

"Ainsi le bon temps regretons
Entre nous, pauvres vieilles sottes,
Assises bas, à croppetons,
Tout en ung tas comme pellettes,
A petit feu de chenevottes,
Tost allumées, tost estainctes.
Et jadis fusmes si mignottes!...
Ainsi emprend à maintz et maintes."

*Ballade de la belle heaulmiere
aux filles de joie*

“**O**R y pensez, belle Gantiere,
Qui m'escoliere souliez estre,
Et vous, Blanche la Savetiere,
Or est-il temps de vous congnoistre!
Prenez à dextre et à senestre,
N'espargnez homme, je vous prie:
Car vielles n'ont ne cours, ne estre,
Ne que monnoye qu'on descrie.

“Et vous, la gente Saulcissiere,
Qui de dancer estes adextre,
Guillemette la Tapissiere,
Ne mesprenez vers vostre maistre:
Tost vous fauldra clorre fenestre,
Quand deviendrez vielle, flestrie.
Plus ne servirez que vielle prebstre,
Ne que monnoye qu'on descrie.

“Jehanneton la Chaperonniere,
Gardez qu'amy ne vous empestre.
Katherine l'Esperonniere,
N'envoyez plus les hommes paistre.

Ballade

Car qui belle n'est ne perpetre
Leur bonne grace, mais leur rie.
Laide viellesse amour n'impetre,
Ne que monnoye qu'on descrie.

ENVOI

“Filles, veuillez vous entremettre
D'escouter pourquoy pleure et crie:
C'est pour ce que ne me puys mettre,
Ne que monnoye qu'on descrie.”

Double ballade sur le mesme propos

POUR ce, aymez tant que vouldrez,
Suyvez assemblées et festes:
En fin ja mieulx vous n'en vauldrez,
Si n'y romprez, fors que vos testes.
Folles amours font les gens bestes:
Salomon en idolatrya,
Samson en perdit ses lunettes...
Bien heureux est qui rien n'y a!

Orpheus, le doulx menestrier,
Jouant de fleustes et musettes,
En fut en dangier du meurtrier
Chien Cerberus à quatre testes,
Et Narcissus, beau filz honnestes,
En ung profond puya se noya,
Pour l'amour de ses amourettes...
Bien heureux est qui rien n'y a!

Sardana, le preux chevalier,
Qui conquist le regne de Cretes,
En voulut devenir moulier
Et filer entre pucellettes;

Double ballade

David le roy, saige prophetes,
Craincte de Dieu en oublya,
Voyant laver cuisses bien faictes...
Bien heureux est qui rien n'y a!

Ammon en voulz deshonnorer,
Feignant de manger tartelettes,
Sa sœur Thamar et deflorer,
Qui fut inceste et deshonestes;
Herodes (pas ne sont sornettes)
Saint Jean Baptiste en decolla,
Pour dances, saultz et chansonnettes.
Bien heureux est qui rien n'y a!

De moy, povre, je vueil parler:
J'en fuz batu, comme à ru telles,
Tout nud, ja ne le quiers celer.
Qui me feit mascher ces groiselles,
Fors Katherine de Vauselles?
Noé le tiers ot, qui fut là,
Mitaines à ces nopces telles...
Bien heureux est qui rien n'y a!

Mais que ce jeune bachelier
Laissast ces jeunes bachelettes,
Non! et, le deust-on vif brusler,
Comme ung chevaucheur d'escovettes.
Plus doulces luy sont que civettes.
Mais toutesfoys fol s'y fia:
Soient blanches, soient brunettes,
Bien heureux est qui rien n'y a!

Double ballade

LXXI

MORTZ estoient, et corps et ames,
En damnée perdition,
Corps pourriz, et ames en flammes,
De quelconque condition.
Toutesfoys, fais exception
Des patriarches et prophetes:
Car, selon ma conception,
Oncques n'eurent grand chault aux fesses.

LXXII

Qui me diroit: "Qui te faict mectre
Si tres-avant ceste parolle,
Qui n'es en theologie maistre?
A toy est presumption folle."
—C'est de JESUS la parabolle,
Touchant le Riche ensevely
En feu, non pas en couche molle,
Et du Ladre de dessus ly.

LXXIII

Se du Ladre eust ven le doigt ardre,
Ja n'en eust requis refrigere,
N'au bout d'icelluy doigt aherdre,
Pour refreschir sa maschouere.
Pions y feront mate chere,
Qui boyvent pourpoint et chemise.
Puisque boyture y est si chere,
Dieu nous garde de la main mise!

(262)

Double ballade

LXXXIV

Ou nom de Dieu, comme j'ay dict,
Et de sa gloriense Mere,
Sans peché soit parfaict ce dict,
Par moy, plus maigre que chimere.
Si je n'ay eu fievre ou fumere,
Ce m'a faict divine clemence,
Mais d'autre mal et perte amere
Je me tays, et ainsi commence:

*Ballade que fait Villon a la Re-
queste de sa Mère, pour prier
Nostre-Dame*

DAME du ciel, regente terrienne,
Emperiere des infernaulx paluz,
Recevez-moy vostre humble chrestienne:
Que comprinse soye entre vos esleuz,
Ce non obstant qu'onceques rien ne valuz.
Les biens de vous, ma dame et ma maistresse,
Sont trop plus grans que ne suis pecheresse,
Sans lesquelz biens ame ne peult merir
N'avoir les cieulx. Je n'en suis menteresse:
En ceste foy je vueil vivre et mourir.

A vostre Filz dictes que je suis sienne:
De luy soyent mes pechez aboluz.
Pardonnez-moy, comme à l'Egyptienne,
Ou comme il feit au cler Theophilus,
Lequel par vous fut quitte et absoluz,
Combien qu'il eust au diable faict promesse.
Preservez-moy que je n'accomplisse ce'
Vierge, portant, sans rompure encourir,
Le sacrement qu'on celebre à la messe...
En ceste foy je vueil vivre et mourir.

Ballade

Femme je suis povrette et ancienne,
Qui riens ne scay, onques lettre ne leuz;
Au monstier voy dont suis parroissienne,
Paradis painct, où sont harpes et luz,
Et ung enfer où damnez sont boulluz;
L'ung me faict paour, l'autre joye et liesse.
La joye avoir fais-moy, haulte Deesse,
A qui pecheurs doivent tous recourir,
Comblez de foy, sans faincte ne paresse...
En ceste foy e vueil vivre et mourir.

ENVOI

Vous portastes, Vierge, digne princesse,
JESUS regnant, qui n'a ne fin ne cesse.
Le Tout-Puissant, prenant nostre foiblesse,
Laissa les cieulx et nous vint secourir,
Offrist à mort sa tres-chere jeunesse.
Nostre Seigneur est tel, je le confesse...
En ceste foy je vueil vivre et mourir.

Ballade de Villon à s'amye

FAULSE beaulté, qui tant me couste cher,
Rude en effect, hypocrite doulceur,
Amour dure plus que fer à mascher:
Nommer te puis de ma deffaçon sour.
Cherme felon, la mort d'ung povre cuer,
Orgueil mussé, qui gens met au mourir,
Yeulx sans pitié! Ne veult droict de rigueur,
Sans empirer, ung povre secourir?

Mieulx m'eust valu avoir esté crier
Ailleurs secours, c'eust esté mon bonheur:
Rien ne m'eust sceu de ce fait arracher.
Trotter m'en fault en fuyte à deshonneur.
Haro, haro, le grant et le mineur!
Et qu'est cecy? Mourray sans coup ferir,
Où pitié peult, selon ceste teneur,
Sans empirer, ung povre secourir.

Ung temps viendra, qui fera desseicher,
Jaulnir, flestrir, vostre espanie fleur:
J'en risse lors, s'enfant peusse marcher,
Mais las! nenny. Ce seroit donc foleur.

Ballade de Villon a s'amye

Vieil je seray; vous, laide et sahs couleur.
Or, beuvez fort, tant que ru peult courir.
Ne donnez pas à tous ceste douleur,
Sans empirer, ung povre secourir.

ENVOI

Prince amoureux, des amans le greigneur,
Vostre mal gré ne vouldroye encourir,
Mais tout franc cuer doit, pour Nostre Seigneur,
Sans empirer, ung povre secourir.

Lay, ou plustost rondeau

MORT, j'appelle de ta rigueur,
Qui as ma maistresse ravie,
Et n'es pas encore assouvie
Se tu ne me tiens en langueur.

Onc puis n'euz force ne vigueur!
Mais que te nuy soit-elle en vie,
Mort?

Deux estions, et n'avions qu'ung cuer!
S'il est mort, force est que devie,
Voire, ou que je vive sans vie,
Comme les images, par cuer,
Mort!

Ballade et Oraison

PERE Noé, qui plantastes la vigne,
 Vous aussi, Loth, qui bustes au rocher,
Par tel party, qu'Amour, qui gens engigne,
De vos filles si vous felt approcher
(Pas ne le dy pour le vous reprocher),
Architriclin, qui bien sceustes cest art:
Tous trois vous pry que vous vueillez percher
L'ame du bon feu maistre Jehan Cotart!

Il fut jadis extract de vostre ligne,
Luy qui beuvoir du meilleur et plus cher,
Et ne deust-il avoir vaillant ung pigne,
Certes, sur tous, c'estoit un bon archer.
On ne luy sceut pot des mains arracher,
Car de bien boire onques ne fut faitart.
Nobles seigneurs, ne souffrez empescher
L'ame du bon feu maistre Jehan Cotart!

Comme homme beu qui chancelle et trepigne,
L'ay veu souvent, quand il s'alloit coucher,
Et une foys il se feit une bigne,
Bien m'en souvient, à l'estal d'ung boucher.

Ballade et Oraison

Brief, on n'eust sceu en ce monde chercher
Meilleur pion, pour boire tost et tart.
Faictes entrer, quant vous orrez hucher,
L'ame du bon feu maistre Jehan Cotart.

ENVOI

Prince, il n'eust sceu jusqu'à terre cracher.
Tousjours crooit: Haro, la gorge m'ard!
Et si ne sceut oncq sa soif estancher,
L'ame du bon feu maistre Jehan Cotart.

*Ballade que Villon donna a ung
gentilhomme nouvellement
marié, pour l'envoyer a son
espouse, par luy conquise a
l'espée*

AU poinct du jour, que l'esparvier se bat,
Meu de plaisir, et par noble coustume,
Bruyt il demaine et de joye s'esbat,
Reçoit son past et se joint à la plume:
Offrir vous vueil (à ce desir m'allume)
Joyeusement ce qu'aux amans bon semble,
Si qu'Averroys l'escrit en son volume,
Et c'est la fin pourquoy sommes ensemble.

Dame serez de mon cueur, sans debat,
Entierement, jusques mort me consume,
Laurier souëf qui pour mon droit combat,
Olivier franc m'ostant toute amertume.
Raison ne veult que je desacoutume
(Et en ce vueil avec elle m'assemble)
De vous servir, mais que m'y accoustume,
Et c'est la fin pourquoy sommes ensemble.

Ballade

Et qui plus est, quant dueil sur moy s'embat,
Par fortune qui souvent si se fume,
Vostre doulx oïl sa malice rebat,
Ne plus ne moins que le vent faict la fume.
Si ne perds pas le graine que je sume
En vostre champ, car le fruct me ressemble:
Dieu m'ordonne que le harse et fume,
Et c'est la fin pourquoy sommes ensemble.

ENVOI

Princesse, oyez ce que cy vous resume:
Que le mien cuer du vostre desassemble,
Jà ne sera, tant de vous en presume,
Et c'est la fin pourquoy sommes ensemble.

Ballade

EN reagal, en arsenic rocher,
En orpiment, en salpestre et chaulx vive;
En plomb boillant, pour mieulx les esmorcher;
En suif et poix, destrampez de lessive
Faictz d'estrons et de pissat de Juifve;
En lavaille de jambes à meseaulx;
En raclure de piedz et vieulx houseaulx;
En sang d'aspic et drogues venimeuses;
En fiels de loups, de regnards et blereaux,
Soient frites ces langues envieuses!

En cervelle de chat qui hayt pescher,
Noir, et si vieil qu'il n'ait dent et gencive;
D'ung vieil mastin, qui vault bien aussi cher,
Tout enraged, en sa bave et salive;
En l'escume d'une mulle poussive,
Detrenchée menu à bons ciseaulx;
En eau où ratz plongent groings et museaulx,
Raines, crapauds et bestes dangereuses,
Serpens, lezards et telz nobles oyseaulx,
Soient frites ces langues envieuses!

En sublimé, dangereux à toucher,
Et au nombril d'une couleuvre vive;
En sang qu'on veoit és pallectes secher,
Chez ces barbiers, quand plaine lune arrive,
Dont l'ung est noir, l'autre plus vert que cive;

Ballade

En chancre et ficz, et en ces ords cuveaulx
Où nourrices essangent leurs drappeaulx;
En petits baings de filles amoureuses
(Qui ne m'entend n'a suivy les bordeaux).
Soient frites ces langues envieuses!

ENVOI

Prince, passez tous ces friands morceaulx,
S'estamine n'avez, sacs ou bluteaux,
Parmy le fons d'une brayes brenneuses
Mais, paravant, en estrons de pourceaulx,
Soient frites ces langues envieuses!

Ballade intitulée, “Les Contredictz de Franc-Gontier”

SUR mol duvet assis, ung gras chanoine,
Lez ung brasier, en chambre bien nattée,
A son costé gisant dame Sydoine,
Blanche, tendre, pollie et attaintée:
Boire ypocras, à jour et à nuyctée,
Rire, jouer, mignoter et baiser,
Et nud à nud, pour mieux des corps ayser,
Les vy tous deux, par un trou de mortaise.
Lors je congneuz que, pour dueil appaiser,
Il n'est tresor que de vivre à son aise.

Se Franc-Gontier et sa compaigne Helaine
Eussent toujours cest' douce vie hantée,
D'oignons, civotz, qui causent forte alaine,
N'en mangeassent bise croute frottée.
Tout leur mathon, ne toute leur potée,
Ne prise ung ail, je le dy sans noysier.
S'ilz se vантent coucher soubz le rosier,
Ne vault pas mieulx lict costoyé de chaise?
Qu'en dietes-vous? Faut-il à ce muser?
Il n'est tresor que de vivre à son aise.

Ballade

De gros pain bis vivent, d'orge, d'avoine,
Et boivent eau toute le long de l'année.
Tous les oyseaulx, d'icy en Babyloine,
A tel escot, une seule journée,
Ne me tiendroient, non une matinée.
Or s'esbate, de par Dieu, Franc-Gontier,
Helaine o luy, soubz le bel esglantier:
Se bien leur est, n'ay cause qu'il me poise.
Mais, quoy qu'il soit du laboureux mestier,
Il n'est tresor que de vivre à son aise.

ENVOI

Prince, jugez, pour tous nous accorder.
Quant est à moy, mais qu'à nul n'en desplaise,
Petit enfant, j'ay ouy recorder
Qu'il n'est tresor que de vivre à son aise.

Ballade des femmes de Paris

QUOY qu'on tient belles langagieres
Florentines, Veniciennes,
Assez pour estre messaigieres,
Et mesmement les anciennes;
Mais, soient Lombardes, Rommaines,
Genevoyses, à mes perilz,
Piemontoises, Savoisiennes,
Il n'est bon bec que de Paris.

De beau parler tiennent chayeres,
Ce dit-on, Neapolitaines,
Et que sont bonnes caquetieres
Allemandes et Prussiennes;
Soient Grecques, Egyptiennes,
De Hongrie ou d'autre pays,
Espaignolles ou Castellenes,
Il n'est bon bec que de Paris.

Brettes, Suyses, n'y sçavent gueres,
Ne Gasconnes et Thoulouzaines;
Du Petit-Pont deux harangeres
Les concluront, et les Lorraines,

Ballade des femmes de Paris

Angloises ou Calaisiennes
(Ay-je beaucoup de lieux compris?),
Picardes, de Valenciennes...
Il n'est bon bec que de Paris.

ENVOI

Prince, aux dames Parisiennes,
De bien parler donnez le prix.
Quoy qu'on die d'Italiennes,
Il n'est bon bec que de Paris.

Ballade de Villon et de la Grosse Margot

SE j'ayme et sers la belle, de bon hait,
M'en devez-vous tenir ne vil ne sot?
Elle a en soy des biens à fin souhait.
Pour son amour, ceings bouelier et passot.
Quand viennent gens, je cours, et happe un pot:
Au vin m'en voys, sans demener grant bruyt.
Je leur tendz eau, frommage, pain et fruict.
S'ils payent bien, je leur dy: "Que bien stat!
Retournez cy, Quand vous serez en ruyt,
En ce bourdeau, où tenons nostre estat"!

Mais, tost après, il y a grant deshait,
Quand sans argent s'en vient coucher Margot:
Voir ne la puis, mon cuer à mort la hait.
Sa robe prens, demy-ceinct et surcot:
Si luy prometz qu'ilz tiendront pour l'escot.
Par les costez ze prend, cest Antechrist;
Crie et jure, par la mort Jesuchrist,
Que non sera. Lors j'empongne ung esclat,
Dessus le nez luy en fais ung escript,
En ce bourdeau, où tenons nostre estat.

Ballade

Puis, paix se faict, et me lasche ung gros pet,
Plus enflée qu'ung venimeux scarbot;
Riant, m'assiet son poing sur mon sommet,
Gogo me dit, et me fier le jambot.
Tous deux yvres, dormons comme ung sabot,
Et, au reveil, quand le ventre luy bruyt,
Monte sur moy, que ne gaste son fruict.
Soubz elle geins, plus qu'ung aiz me faict plat,
De paillarder tout elle me destruict,
En ce bourdeau, où tenons nostre estat.

ENVOI

Vente, gresle, gelle, j'ay mon pain cuict!
Je suis paillard, la paillarde me duit.
Lequel vault mieux? Chascun bien s'entresuit,
L'ung l'autre vault: c'est à mau chat mau rat.
Ordure amons, ordure nous affuyt;
Nous deffuyons honneur, il nous deffuyt,
En ce bourdeau, où tenons nostre estat.

*Belle Leçon de Villon aux enfans
perdus*

BEAULX enfans, vous perdez la plus
Belle rose de vo chapeau,
Mes clercs apprenans comme gluz.
Si vous allez à Montpippeau
Ou à Ruel, gardez la peau:
Car, pour s'esbatre en ces deux lieux,
Cuydant que vanlsist le rappeau,
La perdit Colin de Cayeulx.

Ce n'est pas ung jeu de trois mailles,
Où va corps, et peut-estre l'ame:
S'on perd, rien n'y vault repentailles,
Qu'on ne meure à honte et diffame;
Et qui gaigne n'a pas à femme
Dido la royne de Carthage.
L'homme est donc bien fol et infame
Qui pour si peu couche tel gage.

Qu'ung chascun encore m'escoute:
On dit, et il est verité,
Que charreterie se boyt toute,
Au feu l'hyver, au bois l'esté.
S'argent avez, il n'est enté,
Mais le despendez tost et viste.
Qui en voyez-vous herité?
Jamais mal acquest ne proufite.

Ballade de bonne doctrine

A Ceux de mauvaise vie

CAR or' soyes porteur de bulles,
Pipeur ou hazardeur de dez,
Tailleur de faulx coings, tu te brusles,
Comme ceux qui sont eschaudez;
Traistres pervers, de foy vuydez,
Soyes larron, ravis ou pilles:
Où en va l'acquest, que cuydez?
Tout aux tavernes et aux filles.

Ryme, raille, cymballe, luttes,
Comme folz, faintis, eshontez;
Farce, broille, joue des flustes;
Fais, és villes et és citez,
Fainctes, jeux et moralitez;
Gaigne au berlan, au glic, aux quilles:
Où s'en va tout? Or escoutez:
Tout aux tavernes et aux filles.

De telz ordures te reculles;
Laboure, fauche champs et prez;
Sers et panse chevaux et mulles,
Saucunement tu n'es lettrez;

Ballade de bonne doctrine

Assez auras, se prens en grez.
Mais, se chanvre broyes ou tilles,
Où tendront labours qu'as ouvrez?
Tout aux tavernes et aux filles.

ENVOI

Chausses, pourpoinetz esguilletez,
Robes, et toutes vos drapilles,
Ains que soient usez, vous portez
Tout aux tavernes et aux filles.

Lays

AU retour de dure prison
Où j'ay laissé presque la vie,
Se Fortune a sur moy envie,
Jugez s'elle fait mesprison!
Il me semble que, par raison,
Elle deust bien estre assouvie,
Au retour.

Cecy plain est de desraison,
Qui vucille que du tout desvie.
Plaise à Dieu que l'ame ravie
En soit, lassus, en sa maison,
Au retour!

CY GIST ET DORT, EN CE SOLLIER,
QU'AMOUR OCCIST DE SON RAILLON,
UNG POVRE PETIT ESCOLLIER,
QUI FUT NOMMÉ FRANÇOIS VILLON.
ONCQUES DE TERRE N'EUT SILLON.
IL DONNA TOUT, CHASCUN LE SCET:
TABLE, TRETTEAUX ET CORBILLON.
POUR DIEU, DICTES-EN CE VERSET.

Rondel

REPOS éternel donne à cil,
Sire, clarté perpetuelle,
Qui vaillant plat ny escuelle
N'eut oncques, n'ung brin de percil.
Il fut rez, chef, barbe, sourcil,
Comme ung navet qu'on ret et pelle.
Repos!

Rigueur le transmit en exil,
Et luy frappa au cul la pelle,
Nonobstant qu'il dist: *J'en appelle!*
Qui n'est pas terme trop subtil.
Repos!

*Ballade pour laquelle Villon crye
mercy a chascun*

A CHARTREUX et à Celestins,
A Mendians et à devotes,
A musars et cliquepatins,
A servans et filles mignottes,
Portant surcotz et justes cottes;
A cuyderaulx, d'amours transis,
Chaussans sans meshaing fauves bottes:
Je crye à toutes gens merciz!

A filles monstrans leurs tetins
Pour avoir plus largement hostes;
A ribleux meneurs de hutins,
A basteleurs traynans marmottes,
A folz et folles, sotz et sottes,
Qui s'en vont sifflant cinq et six;
A veufves et à mariottes:
Je crye à toutes gens merciz!

Sinon aux traistres chiens mastins,
Qui m'ont fait manger dures crotes
Et boire eau maintz soirs et matins,
Qu'ores je ne crains pas trois crottes.

'Ballade

Pour eux je feisse petz et rottes;
Je ne puis, car je suis assis.
Au fort, pour eviter riottes,
Je crye à toutes gens merciz!

ENVOI

S'on leur froissoit les quinze costes
De gros maillets, fortz et massis,
De plombée et de telz pelottes,
Je crye à toutes gens merciz!

Ballade pour servir de conclusion

ICI se clost le Testament,
Et finist, du povre Villon,
Venez à son enterrement,
Quant vous orrez le carillon,
Vestuz rouges com vermillion,
Car en amours mourut martir.
Ce jura-il sur son callon,
Quand de ce monde voulut partir.

Et je croy bien que pas ne ment,
Car chassié fut, comme un soullon,
De ses amours hayneusement,
Tant que, d'icy à Roussillon,
Brosse n'y a ne brossillon
Qui n'eust, ce dit-il sans mentir,
Ung lambeau de son cotillon,
Quand de ce monde voulut partir.

Il est ainsi, et tellement,
Quand mourut n'avoit qu'ung haillon.
Qui plus, en mourant, mallement
L'espoingnoit? D'amours l'esguillon,

Ballade

Plus agu que le ranguillon
D'un baudrier, luy faisoit sentir
(C'est de quoy nous esmervillion),
Quand de ce monde voulت partir.

ENVOI

Prince, gent comme esmerillon,
Saichiez qu'il fist, au departir:
Ung traict but de vin morillon,
Quand de ce monde voulت partir.

FIN DU GRAND TESTAMENT

*Epistre en forme de ballade, a
ses amis*

AYEZ pitié, ayez pitié de moy,
A tout le moins, si vous plaist, mes amis !
En fosse giz, non pas soubz houx ne may,
En cest exil ouquel je suis transmis
Par fortune, comme Dieu l'a permis.
Filles, amans, jeunes, vieulx et nouveaulx;
Danceurs, saulteurs, faisans les piez de veaux,
Vifs comme dars, agus comme aguillon;
Gousiers tintans, elers comme gastaveaux:
Le lesserez là, le povre Villon?

Chantres chantans à plaisirance, sans loy;
Galans, rians, plaisans en faictz et diz;
Coureux, allans, francs de faulx or, d'aloy;
Gens d'esperit, ung petit estourdiz:
Trop demourez, car il meurt entandiz.
Faiseurs de laiz, de motets et rondeaux,
Quand mort sera, vous luy ferez chandeaux.
Il n'entre, où gist, n'escler ne tourbillon;
De murs espois on luy a fait bandeaux:
Le lesserez là, le povre Villon?

Epistre en forme de ballade

Venez le veoir en ce piteux arroy,
Nobles hommes, francs de quars et de dix,
Qui ne tenez d'empereur ne de roy,
Mais seulement de Dieu de Paradiz:
Jeuner luy fault dimanches et mardiz,
Dont les dens a plus longues que ratteaux;
Aprés pain sec, non pas aprés gasteaux,
En ses boyaulx verse eau à gros bouillon;
Bas enterré, table n'a, ne tretteaux:
Le lesserez là, le povre Villon?

ENVOI

Princes nommez, anciens, jouvenceaux,
Impetrez-moy graces et royaux sceaux,
Et me montez en quelque corbillon.
Ainsi le font l'un à l'autre pourceaux,
Car, où l'un brait, ilz fuyent à monceaux.
Le lesserez là, le povre Villon?

Rondel

BON jour, bon an, bonne semaine,
Honneur, santé, joye prochaine,
Perseverer de bien en mieulx
Et joye d'amours vous doint Dieux,
Ce jour present, en bonne estraine,
Dame belle trop plus qu'Helaine,
Tousjours d'argent la bourse plaine,
Vivre longtemps sans estre vieulx;
Bon jour, bon an, bonne semaine.

Aprés ceste vie mondaine,
Avoir la joye souveraine:
De là ravis lassus és cieulx,
Où nous nous puissions veoir joyeux
Sans jamais sentir grief ne paine;
Bon jour, bon an, bonne semaine.

Rondel

LE souvenir de vous me tue,
Mon seul bien, quand je vous voy,
Car je nous jure, sur ma foy,
Que ma joye sans vous est mme.
Quand je vous ay perdu de vue
Je meurs de tristesse et d'ennoy:
Le souvenir de vous me tue.

Hélas! ma chere seur tenne,
Veuillez avoir pitié de moy,
Car pour vous tant de mal repay
Qu'onques fait amant sous la nue:
Le souvenir de vous me tue.

Rondel

ENTENS à moy, vray dieu d'amours,
Et faiz que la mort ait son cours
Hastivement.

Car j'ay mal employé mes jours.
Je meurs en aymant par amours
Certainement.

Languir me fault en griefs doulours.

*Ballade contre les mesdisans de
la France*

RENCONTRÉ soit de bestes feu gectans
Que Jason vit, querant la Toison d'or;
Ou transmué d'homme en beste, sept ans,
Ainsi que fut Nabugodonosor;
Ou bien ait perte aussi griefve et villaine
Que les Troyens pour la prinse d'Helaine;
Ou avallé soit avec Tantalus
Et Proserpine aux infernaulx pallus;
Ou plus que Job soit en griefve souffrance,
Tenant prison en la court Dedalus,
Qui mal vouldroit au royaume de France!

Quatre mois soit en un vivier chantant,
La teste au fons, ainsi que le butor;
Ou au Grand Turc vendue argent comptant,
Pour estre mis au harnois comme ung tor;
Ou trente ans soit, comme la Magdelaine,
Sans vestir drap de linge ne de laine;
Ou noyé soit, comme fut Narcisus
Ou aux cheveux, comme Absalon, pendus,
Ou comme fut Judas, par desperance;
Ou puist mourir comme Simon Magus,
Qui mal vouldroit au royaume de France!

Ballade

D'Octovien puisse venir le temps:
C'est qu'on luy coule au ventre son tresor;
Ou qu'il soit mis entre meules rotans,
En un moulin, comme fut sainct Victor;
Ou transgloutis en la mer, sans halaine,
Pis que Jonas au corps de la balaine;
Ou soit banny de la clarté Phœbus,
Des biens Juno et du soulas Venus,
Et du grant Dieu soit mauldit à outrance,
Ainsi que fut roy Sardanapalus,
Qui mal vouldroit au royaume de France!

ENVOI

Prince, porté soit des cleris Eolus,
En la forest où domine Glocus,
Ou privé soit de paix et d'esperance,
Car digne n'est de posseder vertus,
Qui mal vouldroit au royaume de France!

*Le Debat du Cœur et du Corps
de Villon en forme de Ballade*

QU'EST-CE que j'oy?
—Ce suis-je.
—Qui?
—Ton Cœur,
Qui ne tient mais qu'à ung petit filet.
Force n'ay plus, substance ne liqueur,
Quand je te voy retract ainsи senlet,
Com provre chien tappy en recullet.
—Pourquoy est-ce?
—Pour ta folle plaisirance.
—Que t'en chault-il?
—J'en ay la desplaisance.
—Laisse m'en paix!
—Pourquoy?
—J'y penseray.
—Quand sera-ce?
—Quand seray hors d'enfance.
—Plus ne t'en dy.
—Et je m'en passeray.
—Que penses-tu?
—Estre homme de valeur.
—Tu as trente ans.
—C'est l'aage d'ung mulet.

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Ballade

—Est-ce enfance?

—Nenny.

—C'est donc folleur

Qui te saisit?

—Par où?

—Par le collet.

—Rien ne congnois.

—Si fais: mouches en laict:

L'ung est blanc, l'autre est noir, c'est la distance.

—Est-ce donc tout?

—Que veulx-tu que je tance?

Si n'est assez, je recommenceray.

—Tu es perdu!

—J'y mettray résistance.

—Plus ne t'en dy.

—Et je m'en passeray.

—J'en ay le dueil; toi, le mal et douleur.

Si fusse ung povre ydiot et folet,

Au cuer eusses de t'excuser couleur:

Se n'as-tu soing, tout ung tel, bel ou laid,

Ou la teste as plus dure qu'ung jalet,

Ou mieulx te plaist qu'honneur ceste meschance.

Que répondras à ceste consequence?

—J'en seray hors, quand je trespasseray.

—Dieu! quel confort!

—Quelle saige eloquence!

—Plus ne t'en dy.

—Et je m'en passeray.

—D'ond vient ce mal?

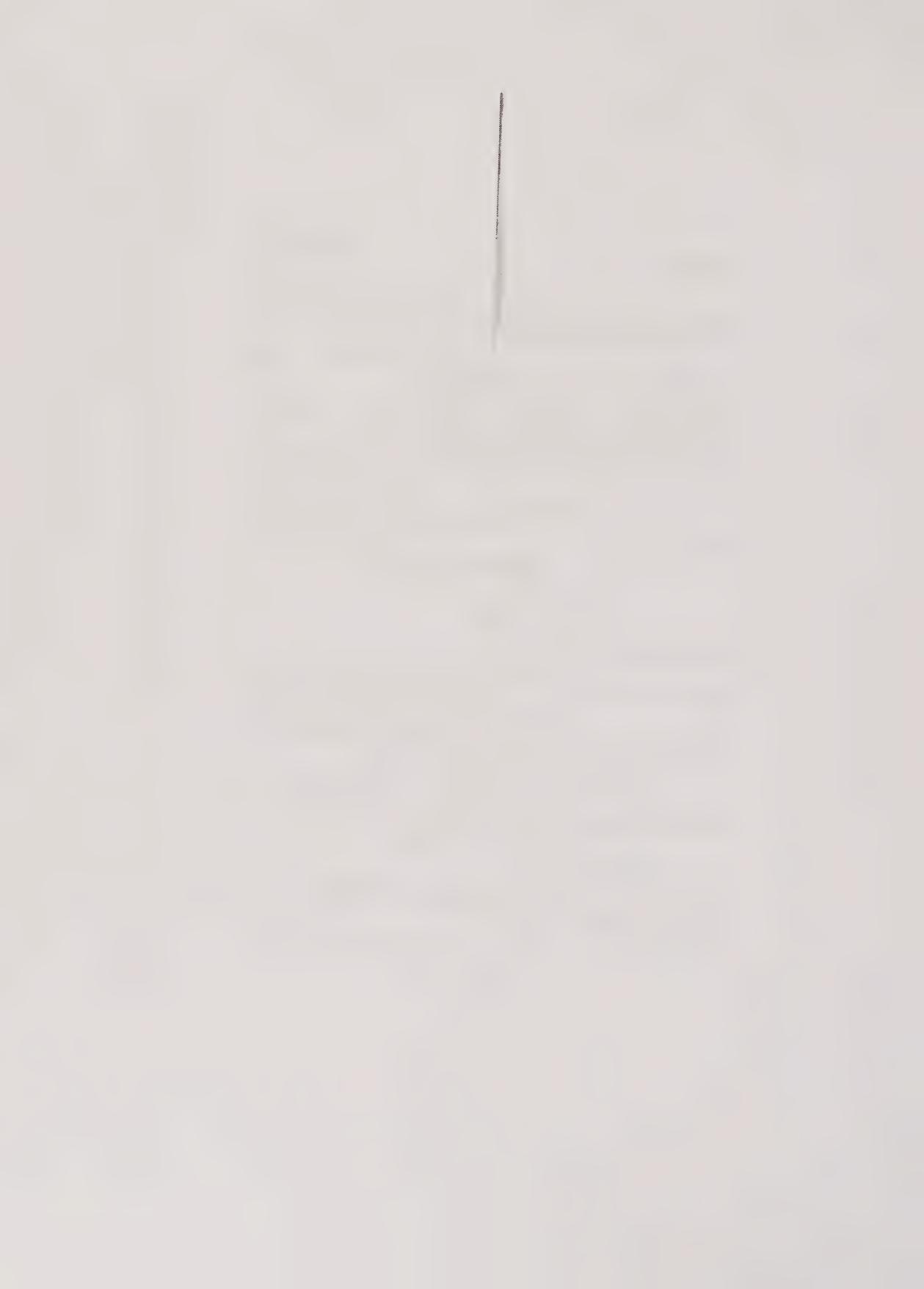
—Il vient de mon malheur.

Ballade

Quand Saturne me feit mon fardelet,
Ces maulx y mist, je le croy.
—C'est foleur:
Son seigneur es, et te tiens son valet.
Voy, Salomon escript en son roulet:
“Homme sage, ce dit-il, a puissance
Sur les planetes et sur leur influence.”
—Je n'en croy rien: tel qu'ils m'ont faict seray.
—Que dis-tu?
—Rien.
—Certes, c'est ma créance.
Plus ne t'en dy.
—Et je m'en passeray.

ENVOI

—Veux-tu vivre?
—Dieu m'en doint la puissance!
—Il te fault...
—Quoy?
—Remors de conscience;
Lire sans fin.
—Et en quoy?
—En science.
Laisse les folz!
—Bien! j'y adviseray.
—Or le retiens?
—J'en ay bien souvenance.
—N'attends pas trop, que tourne à desplaisance.
Plus ne t'en dy.
—Et je m'en passeray.



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